FROM THE CLINIC

TO THE STREETS

PSYCHOANALYSIS FOR REVOLUTIONARY FUTURES

LARA SHEEHI

"READ THIS BOOK" – DYLAN RODRÍGUEZ

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“Lara Sheehi cultivates a radically activated recognition of the conditions of colonial war as a state of intimate endangerment. From here, the liberationist mandate to nurture psychic militancy is both a prerequisite and an ongoing practice of refusing the settler state’s genocidal normalcy. Read this book, absorb its implications, and prepare to determine what comes next.”

—Dylan Rodríguez, Distinguished Professor,
University of California at Riverside

“Let’s get right to it: Upholding the split between the intrapsychic and sociopolitical reproduces the violence of power. As an antidote, read, embrace and enact the lessons of Lara Sheehi’s testimony of radical love offered in service of transformation. Understand how her theorization of psychic intrusion transforms into psychic militancy and how this enriches our armory as we battle the relations of rule in these times of genocide, ongoing settler colonialism and techno-fascism.”

—Gail Lewis, Visiting Professor, Women’s, Gender,
and Sexuality Studies, Yale University

“This astonishing, innovative and militant book seizes psychoanalysis and, with Fanonian urgency in times of genocide, puts it to work, for us instead of against us; Sheehi shows us how to radically repeat our resistance to power.”

—Ian Parker, The Red Clinic and co-author of
Psychoanalysis and Revolution

“What if no one sided with colonialism? Are you and your comrades equipped with the clarity required to truly hold the line? How can resistance fighters today prevail psychically against the confusion-mongers and despair-peddlers who dog them at every turn? In a moment queasily rife with counterinsurgent literary misappropriations of Fanonian psychoanalysis, this book embodies a despecialized psychoanalytic praxis of revolutionary anticolonialism that is genuinely worthy of the name ‘Fanon.’ Blazing with militant clarity, Lara Sheehi lays her finger directly on the myriad ‘intrusions’ designed to thwart, confuse, pacify, and derail internationalist resistance to imperial barbarism at the level of our very interiority. Here is a book that mounts the barricades, and compels us to wholeheartedly struggle, alongside its author, for real planetary liberation and a life worth living.”

—Sophie Lewis, author of *Abolish the Family:*
A Manifesto for Care and Liberation

“Sheehi deftly illuminates the mechanics of psychological warfare and provides a political vocabulary, indeed a methodology for how we can protect our minds against intrusion of depraved colonial mythologies. An invaluable text for our times.”

—Orisanmi Burton, author of *Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism,*
Prison Repression, and the Long Attica Revolt

“Like the manuals that circulate amongst militants, teaching us how to build barricades, avoid teargas or hide IP addresses, this book treats psychoanalysis as a daily political practice of counter-repetition, a tool that can help us resist the colonization of the psyche by reactionary forces. An amazing book that takes us from the de-specialization of the practice, away from the elites, to its political reskilling.”

—Gabriel Tupinambá, psychoanalyst, author of
The Desire of Psychoanalysis

“A waterfall of insurgent thinking, this book sets the direction in which revolutionary theorizing will be moving in the years to come. In resolute and deft moves, Sheehi’s willful text cuts open psychoanalytic shibboleths (repair, dialogue, politesse) so we can see for ourselves the counterinsurgencies innervating them. Her radical and unflinching investigation unbendingly centers Palestine to reveal how we are deskilled and psychically intruded, made to feel exhausted, fearful, confused, and despairing. But Sheehi also teaches us how psychoanalysis can re-skill us, arming us with a psychic militancy that can bring the seductions that Zionist, fascist, and colonial logics exert on us to a screeching halt. Sheehi writes for nothing less than to re-arrange the terms by which we relate to the world.”

—Avgi Saketopoulou, psychoanalyst, author of *Sexuality Beyond Consent*

“This is psychoanalysis reanimated by fierce love and an abolitionist spirit. Rather than turning away from the ways psychoanalysis has been used to stabilize and serve power, Sheehi carefully sets out this history as the ground from which liberatory work can emerge. Fiercely loving, historically grounded, and practical, this book offers intellectual and ethical companionship to practitioners, students, and educators seeking transformative futures. This is psychic militancy by example—in thought, language, and action. This book is a timely reminder that the question of what psychoanalysis is for is not only unsettled, but re-imaginable, and in our hands.”

—Foluke Taylor, author of *Unruly Therapeutic:*
Black Feminist Writings and Practices in Living Room

From the Clinic to the Streets

Psychoanalysis for Revolutionary Futures

Lara Sheehi

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To the people of Palestine, Lebanon and Yemen—may we all shoulder the responsibility of your sacrifices

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Acknowledgments

We are more than two years into a genocide waged by a settler state armed to the teeth by the world's most cruel empire, itself a settler colony, currently turning that cruelty inward at an alarming rate against migrants, students, and any dissident or non-normative subject. This book is about arming ourselves with psychic militancy so that we can fight the global rise of fascism and ensure our revolutionary commitments will sustain us through the long struggle ahead. The psychic militancy needed to organize my thoughts into book form was possible because of the textured networks of solidarity, love, and sustenance that surround me; that tended to and cared for me, my heart, my mind, and my soul over the past several years, especially. I am thankful for the institutional support provided by the University of South Africa's Institute for Social and Health Sciences (ISHS)—the labor of the ISHS faculty and staff is unparalleled and I am lucky to be able to learn alongside you.

Thank you to my editor and dear comrade, David Shulman, for your commitment to and excitement for this project. David and I met serendipitously at the Palestine Book Awards in 2022, having been seated at the same table. I am so lucky I chose that night to crack out of my introvert bubble and speak to someone I did not know. Your encouragement and warmth were central to my writing a book that was militantly aligned with my politics and your own political commitments made your trust in me, in my work, and in what we could create together a transformative experience. My gratitude also to everyone at Pluto Press for remaining committed to a radical leftist politics. You make it possible for many of us to find an intellectual sanctuary that does not include political compromise.

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Garth, and Nick whose hospitality, love, good nature, and humor have made trips to Johannesburg and Cape Town feel like a second home. To Foluke, Gail, Robert, and Amal in the imperial belly, your messages of love, photos of celebration, and poetry feel just as life-giving as the wonderful dinners/lunches we are gifted in real time. To Luke and Ian at the Red Clinic—your vision was prescient, and your labor has nourished a place of radical psychoanalysis for so many of us. I am especially grateful to senior psychoanalytic mentors, Nancy Caro Hollander, Stephen Portuges, Lynne Layton, and Monisha Nayar-Akhtar, who have taken interest in me, my career, and my scholarship since I was a graduate student and who have stood by me despite immense pressures not to do so. To my conspirators: Razzan, Carter, Leilani, Mary, Ally, Kristen, Molly, and Vanessa, your phone calls, texts, dog photos, and offers to send me meat you have just hunted (Carter) have meant more than you can imagine. I am especially moved by your fierce loyalty and protectiveness. Also, every emoji, every *compa* Castro or Chávez sticker, every Che video, every photo of the beauty of flowers in full bloom or of enchanted forests sent during peak writing were not only reminders of the shared revolutionary commitments across distance but were also the caring fuel that was funneled into this book in its most difficult stages.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Jared Ware and his amazing partner, J., who is just as central to the Millennials Are Killing Capitalism! platform Jared has so generously shared with me and so many of our comrades. My thinking about psychic militancy could not have crystallized into what is in this book without Jared's generosity and our conversations, both on and off the live streams. Our work together has allowed me to despecialize the field in which I was trained and hold it accountable both for its sordid past and equally disturbing and violent present. Likewise, a huge thank you to my comrades at the Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism—your political commitment and support is a wellspring that reminds me of the importance of critical knowledge production and the ethics of disruption against the backdrop of fascism. Thank you especially to my most generous intellectual mentors and friends, David Eng, Jasbir Puar, Robin D.G. Kelley, Dylan

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To helen, it is not an exaggeration to say I could not have survived the wretched workspace we shared had it not been for you; your friendship and ride or die instinct, love, thoughtfulness, wit, and intellectual generosity allowed me the space to continue thinking and feeling with the intensity that this book needed.

There is no one in the world quite like Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, and I am deeply grateful to have her in my life as a dear mentor, friend, sister, and comrade. Her constant encouragement to "keep writing, keep thinking, keep speaking Palestine" runs throughout these pages. I am especially grateful to her for inviting me to be part of al-Hadinah Al-Fikriyah where I first publicly shared ideas from this book.

Avgi and Ann, *habibati*, where would this book (and I!) be without your comradeship, long chats, and trips together. In short, it would not be. I have learned so much from the excitement and dedication you each bring not only to psychoanalysis, but to the critical engagement with the world at large as well as your stunningly daring scholarship. You not only stood by me with the most ferocious loyalty and equal parts life-sustaining rage and love but also affirmed that I did not need to compromise myself or my politics. I hope you see your imprint as clearly as I felt it across these pages. Αυγή, μ∈ τιμά ιδιαίτ∈ρα που απ' όλα τα άτομα στον κόσμο μ∈ μπ∈ρδ∈ύουν διαρκώς μ∈ σένα, αγαπημένη μου.

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a fight with power and to my baba for teaching me that connectedness to our Arabness and the fight for our region should be uncompromising. To my siblings, Ziad, Nour, and Nizar, living near you for the two years I was in Doha reignited a part of me I thought I had lost; thank you for bringing Dalea, Reem, Rakan, Ryan, and Sophie into my world. My teta Montaha remains present in my life and heart long after she has passed; I wish she were alive to see that I learned to refuse the self-effacement she felt compelled to perform just to live in the world. I am also grateful to my in-laws Patricia and Wade, for their love, company, and support, especially with Marcello. My sons, J and S, are a perpetual source of joy and pride; our phone conversations and dinners together not only remind me of the lies inherent to biological determinism but also how lucky I have been to be invited into their worlds.

Most centrally, and the hardest to distill into words: I owe so much of this book's existence, my intellectual and affective stamina, and scholarly rigor to the love of my life, Stephen. Yours is a sustaining love that has spanned decades and flourishes in every layer of the struggles that center us and our commitment. The life we have created together and the world we fight for is a wellspring of militancy. Thank you falls too short.

ةحفص لك بلع ةركف لكو ةملك لكب انتايحو انبج لكو كحورو كبلق فوشتب هللا ءاش نإ

Glossary

disavowal	a process by which someone on an unconscious level acknowledges reality but also engages in splitting it off from awareness
disidentification	a rejection of the psychic and affective connection/relation with objects (people) or processes
identification	a taking in of selected (often valued) parts of objects (people) or processes
internalization	a process of taking aspects of others, a relational dynamic or experience into the internal world
introjection	internalization of aspects of objects (people), the entire relational dynamic, or a process which then becomes part of self-representation
repetition compulsion/ compulsion to repeat	an unconscious process in which people re-enact experiences vs. just remember them
splitting	a process by which good/bad or positive/ negative aspects of self and others or processes remain unintegrated or unable to exist simultaneously
transference	a redirection of desires, expectations and feelings from an important relationship or figure onto a new relationship (often in reference to the relationship with the analyst)

Introduction
From the Clinic to the Streets: Psychoanalysis for Revolutionary Futures

In 2017, I was on a panel during the yearly conference for the Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology (SPPP), that year being held in New York City. The panel was simply named, “Talking about Palestine in Psychoanalysis.” The space quickly became standing-room only, partially owing to the shifting demographic of the Society—one that was more interested in “the sociopolitical” as opposed to psychoanalysis’ traditional forte, the intrapsychic, or the internal psychic experience of the individual cleaved from their environment.

Approximately halfway through our panel, a middle-aged white man wearing a large Israeli flag on his t-shirt entered through the only door in the back of the room. Standing by the door as if to hold us hostage, he exuded aggression and carried with him a large paper bag that I immediately spotted. The combination of his imperiousness and aggression made it no stretch to imagine that he carried a gun in the bag. He was reminiscent of the archetypal entitled Zionist settler so many of us know, their now familiar images flooding our social media with their self-documented war crimes and arrogant genocidal claims to Palestinian land.[1] By 2017, I had already experienced this archetype, though never in this conference setting.

It became evident that he was determined to make his presence known to *me*. The playbook was familiar to him—and, importantly, as I will describe later, to me, too—and he followed it exactly: his eyes were locked on me, making certain that I knew he was on a mission, glaring, not

incidentally, at the only woman and only Arab on the panel. With an almost parodic performance of hypermasculinity, he stood against the wall, guarding the door, flexing his biceps and cracking his knuckles, not breaking his eye contact with me, as if preparing for a fight. He then appeared to "warrior up," wrapping his neck with a *kuffiyeh*—a kuffiyeh, however, adorned with Israeli flags. "Palestine has no place in psychoanalysis!" he yelled, admonishing the panelists and then turning his gaze on any Jewish members he knew in the audience, addressing them by their name. To me, he was more pointed—"There is no such thing as Palestinians!"—and wanted me to know, "this is a political agenda and you are violently sneaking it into psychoanalysis." My sleeper cell existence was meant to be punctuated through his Zionist performance.

It was clear that this experience was a first for many in the room. A video I took of one of his outbursts is deeply troubling—a room full of clinicians, many of whom are "frozen," heads hanging, unsure of how to intervene. Many confided in me following the panel that they had been concerned the man might have been carrying a weapon; many women further commented to me about their sense of danger and feelings of being intimidated, as well as their concern about confronting an aggressive, hypermasculinist male in a closed space with no escape. I later found out that he was a member of the SPPP, a staunch Zionist Israeli activist working with an astroturf organization who regularly intruded on pro-Palestine events, *and* he was a psychoanalyst living in New York.

The intention of this panel was to use psychoanalytic theory, practice, and technique to highlight how Palestine and the Palestinian narrative had been forcibly displaced outside of the realm of psychoanalytic engagement. Some of us spoke to how this lacuna was not coincidental, particularly given the ways in which, historically, colonialism and settler colonialism operate. The colonized is not a speaking subject, even in the business of the so-called "talking cure." Frantz Fanon's axiomatic reminder about "the racial distribution of guilt"[2]—how the colonized was always-already presumed guilty and fixed in the settler's narrative—was immediately within our grasp. My personal intention for being on this panel was broader,

though at the time I did not quite have the language to describe it. I now recognize—as this book will delve into—that this was the instinctual, perhaps visceral (if we are to follow Fanon), knowledge that a *disruption* had to happen for new and radical psychoanalytic knowledge to be produced. "Speaking Palestine," as Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian[3] reminds us, is an insistence on the empirical reality that Palestine and its indigenous people exist. Speaking Palestine everywhere, including at a psychoanalytic conference, was committing to a refusal to allow settler colonial logics to unfold unchecked. In my mind, Palestine belonged *everywhere*, and here was my insistence that this "everywhere" *must* include psychoanalysis, the realm of theory and method that, from its inception into its more contemporary forms, also posits that disruption is the *process* necessary for transformative change. I was aware then that this speaking could not happen without its attending disruption. And I was prepared for that disruption—*as we all should be*.

Over the years within my profession, I had come to recognize that Palestine was a four-letter word;[4] a taboo, not a small claim in Freud's legacy. In my experience, there is nothing quite like the mere whisper of Palestine to set these logics in motion. As we have witnessed across various settings with piercing acuity over the past year and a half of genocide (at the time of writing) enacted by the settler colonial Zionist state,[5] the mere mention of Palestine can instigate an ideological psychic break. Any mere mention of Palestine still manages to induce psychic collapse, even within the ranks of those who so resolutely insist that their profession and psychoanalytic training grants them a unique psychic maturity and ability to "hold space." In other words, Palestine has always been a harbinger of psychoanalytic meltdown. This meltdown that accompanies any mention of Palestine draws us to heed psychoanalyst Avgi Saketopoulou's advocacy for a "return to the site of our constitutive trauma"—this time that of psychoanalysis—"not as a rote and mechanical recursion that is too hackneyed to escape iteration but as a way of touching inaugural wounds, opening up new possibilities."[6] In her theorizing, psychoanalysis is too often "oriented to closing of wounds,"[7] when the liberating work is to be

found in the risk involved in the process of unsettling what appears to be settled, scarred over, or covered. The Palestine-induced meltdown often acts as the channel by which these "inaugural wounds" are quickly, even if sloppily, sutured. While the pull toward what Stephen Sheehi and myself have called "psychoanalytic innocence"[8] is especially strong in these situations—that is, we are seduced into stopping the perceived hemorrhaging—Saketopoulou teaches us that it is important to insist that nothing can be settled through theoretical or technical ossification. If nothing else, back in the conference room, such ossification could lead us to believe the "innocent" claim that Palestine did not belong in psychoanalysis, especially if the messenger had been less overt in his aggression. Being lured into accepting the standard parameters of who and what belongs in psychoanalytic inquiry may lead us also to miss the psychic grammar involved in the processes of carceral discipline to which these norms subject us. Most pressingly, in the context of a psychoanalytic conference, we might also miss that this Zionist aggressor was determined to complete the subsumption of even Palestinian resistance into the settler psychic fantasy of full domination.

While confronted by his hostile antics, something else also emerged both outside and within me. Only now can I look back and understand that this pronounced interior shift was a consolidation. Everything I had previously known only viscerally, instinctually, was moving its way into a working theory of what in this book I refer to as *psychic intrusions*, modes of violation of our psychic province with the intent of carceral discipline and, perhaps more importantly, the necessity for *psychic militancy* to ward off the intended violence of such intrusions. Perhaps the theory coalesced in this moment because the intrusion came from an ardent Zionist, a masculinist caricature of the genocidal ideology to which he was wed. Because of his glaring alignment to his ideology, I was able to consolidate knowledge about how an assault on a (my) psyche was exploiting a psychic grammar that had *already primed me to understand myself as guilty and then self-discipline accordingly*. Said more simply, psychic intrusions mobilize their impact through mechanics that are meant to undermine and

dismantle one's ability to remain affirmatively connected to *material reality*. Though it may seem simple, psychic intrusions are meant to make access to material reality, such as "there *is* a thing called Palestine and it is inhabited by Palestinians," seem confusing, irrelevant, or impossible. Psychic militancy, on the other hand, is unbendingly affixed to material reality. The practice of remaining aligned with psychic militancy is the focus of this book.

Perhaps what I will also refer to as *militant clarity* was also easier to access because I had already committed to occupying an antagonistic position. This meant that I did not fall into the common trap of believing academics or clinical conferences, for example, will altruistically make space for disruption in the name of "free inquiry." Existing in antagonism also allowed me to prepare for a room largely full of people who I was confident would not confront the violence of a Zionist vigilante. As we will discuss later, engaging spaces antagonistically helps position us to take up psychic militancy more easily. Back in the room, with the insipid predictability of liberalism, many responded to this aggressor's outburst with empty nods and calls for "dialogue," as if talking *more* would magically neutralize the violence unfolding in their midst. It became clear that these psychoanalytic clinicians could not apprehend the limits of their talking cure, even as it hit a wall at full speed.

We could get stuck here, and there would be much for us to unpack about how appeals to dialogue, especially during violent confrontations, often act as perniciously demobilizing and disciplinary tactics directed especially at the marginalized and colonized.[9] For the purpose of this book, however, I am more interested in attuning to another layer of what was unfolding. In the force of the psychic intrusion's impact, I intuited that something more invasive was happening than just the outburst of an entitled, indignant Zionist white man. The intent of the outburst was not just to disrupt the process. And it certainly was not a genuine grievance or protest. Rather, the intent was to reassert the settler ideology of violence and hierarchy, as much in the room, in discourse, as within the psychic topography of those present. The "disruption" presented by Palestine was

answered by a necessary belligerence, an aggression that was meant to lodge itself inside my psyche, in all our psyches, to activate logics of domination on which we all were reared. In this way, the outburst was not only meant to demobilize a political intervention but to confound and redirect our thinking away from the material realities of Palestine and psychoanalysis' complicity with Zionist apartheid and settler colonialism.

His bellicose presence could only be most effective if it were introjected whole—taken in fully, without contestation. In other words, the continuous outburst, interruptions, shouting, and intimidations were intended to fix my/our internal topography such that I/we could not readily access the psychic space for militancy—the space of the knowledge that guides my/our refusals against violent intrusions. With the knowledge that this was an ideological disruption, I acted accordingly. I reached for my phone to videotape what I knew would be his eventual outburst(s); I repetitiously and vigorously wrote to myself on the pad of paper closest to me: *Do not let him colonize your mind*. *He is trying to disorient you; do not let him.* Outwardly, with every outburst, I intervened with statements that described the violent process that was happening, naming them as natural extensions of Zionism's racist logics, expansionist intent, and Palestinian erasure. Rather than rely on theoretical interpretations that would only work to displace that violence out of the room, I intervened in real time practicing a *willful* refusal against psychic intrusion.[10] How we access this willfulness under the violent duress of psychic intrusions will be discussed later in the book.

As I was busy readying my camera and reminding myself of the settler-vigilante's pointedly disruptive purpose, I also found myself keenly aware of the curious effect his violence had on most people in the room. It is not uncommon for (typically more senior) clinicians, and often anyone who is becoming inculcated into the craft of psychoanalysis, to flaunt their psychoanalytic bona fides related to how attentive they are to affective processes even in non-clinical situations. In their estimation—and in the way they dismissively and condescendingly admonish others—if you are "well analyzed," you should be able to access your psychic capacity to engage in higher-order social process. Put colloquially, you should not be

prone to lose your shit. You may have intuited how quickly this tenet morphs into a civilizing discourse laced with the carceral logics of coloniality. What comes to count as "losing your shit" is distinctly raced, gendered, and classed. And, it is politicized. In the conference room, the very spokespeople for a supposed psychic prowess of "holding space" instead very predictably reached for their vacuous *theory* to explain what was happening in the room. Even as a very real aggression was happening in front of their eyes, they reached to offer theoretical readings of what this man was "holding for the group process" or what his anger may have been "displacing." At one point, a senior clinician who is well known for their work on racism stated, "*sometimes*, the group needs to decide to eject an aggressor"—and yet, no such action ensued. Their tepid response is as central as my own action in bringing into being the orientation of this book. That "special skill" of theirs to meaningfully intervene and/or not lose their shit, the skill they so readily deploy when talking about "black rage" or the "passionate" Arab, was conspicuously absent for a full two hours.

Though I did not yet have the words to describe it, those moments germinated the idea of what I now refer to as *psychic militancy*: a militancy that does not excise theory, but that is nonetheless primarily concerned with theory as a mode of guiding praxis. A psychic militancy *against* psychic intrusions; a psychic militancy that arms us in the increasingly crucial fight over our psychic province. What was painfully missing from the theoretical interventions of the audience—the interventions abstracted by and ossified in the realm of the clinic alone—was an acknowledgment of what was unfolding in real time, what was *materially* present. A choice was being made, even if some would claim it was done unconsciously: a reliance on the clinic and its attendant technical maneuvers as displacement. The clinic, as is often the case, emerges as a container for a violent action, *even when it is not clinical in nature*; a violent action, in this case, with roots in a material reality of Zionist aggression and expansionism that is shored up juridically, politically, and relationally.[11] As colleagues rushed to push the settler-vigilante's violence back into the clinic for safe handling, I understood his imperious imperative not only as an attempt to silence

dissenting voices but also purposefully to deflect and derail a reality-testing exercise that sought to bring Palestine to the forefront against the crushing weight of a dominantly entrenched Zionist ideology. His was a weaponization of the dominant and normative ideology, one that, like all strains of normativity, was being threatened and challenged by material reality, in this case that of Palestine, which the forces of Zionist domination seek to ideologically manipulate and distort.

If we are to call this belligerent intrusion "an enactment" in psychoanalytic terms, it is one that stems from a real-time insistence on what Stephen Sheehi and myself have called settler colonial "reality-bending."[12] Psychic militancy and its constitutive refusals challenge this reality-bending and the hegemony of settler colonial logics that shore up settler colonial normativity that are otherwise meant to go undetected, unnamed, unacknowledged. In that room, the mere mention of *talking about Palestine* was so threatening as to cause a cavalcade of aggression, the primary intention of which was psychic intrusion, which in turn could metamorphose into the carceral self-discipline that ultimately stabilizes oppressive structures. The violent act was not arbitrary, nor was it individual or individualized, even if I was its target, as many of us turn out to be. Rather, as I will unpack in this book, these psychic intrusions can better be understood as a logical extension of systems of domination and oppression more broadly, and specifically here, the settler colonial state now known as Israel; a violent entity that necessitates settler colonial outposts everywhere—even here at a conference— to sustain its myth. Further, in the context of psychoanalysis, it was a vigilante attempt to define what constitutes appropriate or pure psychoanalytic content, a practice that itself is deeply troubling and perpetuated by ideology, but also very commonplace. It is for this reason that this book speaks of what I refer to as *despecializing* psychoanalysis.

A despecialized psychoanalysis in that 2017 conference room could have been the mechanism through which we might have tracked and externalized the psychic grammar of what happens *psycho-politico-affectively* when we, for example, speak of Palestine. Through a

despecialization of psychoanalytic theory, method, and process, we could have come to name and acknowledge the ideological weight of Zionism as Palestine's alleged counterpart. More importantly, we would have been able to understand and speak back in real time as to *why* the mere mention of Palestine can collapse the ability to remain in the material analysis, inevitably banished back into the symbolic, into the abstract, back into the clinic, comfortably splitting between the intrapsychic and the sociopolitical. But, in our 2017 conference room, psychoanalysis was not despecialized, so — as predictable as the staleness and non-effectiveness of the clinicians' theoretical interventions—the aggressor's belligerent and invasive behavior continued unabated. At the end of the panel, he forced the pamphlet "101 Lies that Palestinians Tell" into the hands of the attendees, many of whom, despite looking visibly disturbed by his violent outbursts, politely took it. All the more reason for this book's attempt to despecialize psychoanalysis for revolutionary futures.

PSYCHOANALYSIS BEGINS WITH FANON

Over the past decade and, with increasing tenacity over more than a year and a half of the Zionist settler state's televised genocide in the Gaza Strip, I have contemplated, studied and experimented with how we can "seize psychoanalysis"—my field of study and applied practice. How can we despecialize psychoanalytic theory, techniques, and practice to serve as one of many tools for revolutionary action and social transformation from the clinic to the streets? As for every other intentional study, there is a backstory.

As *all* psychoanalysis should, the story begins with Frantz Fanon. I can retroactively locate and distill my interest in Fanon as being intuitive as much as it was life-affirming. Most importantly, it was/is a political necessity. The timeline is important, as is the now-knowledge that I knew Fanon viscerally, that is, in my body and muscle memory, before meeting him "formally"—or meeting him "as a comrade," as my own dear comrade, Black feminist and psychoanalyst Gail Lewis later pointed out. Beginning

psychoanalysis with Fanon as opposed to Freud is not an anachronistic reading of psychoanalysis, nor is it a glitch in the timeline or, as one psychoanalyst once screamed at me, "a dismissal of Freud's labor." Rather, beginning with Fanon announces our intention to use psychoanalysis as one of many tools for our *fight* against oppressive forces rather than a stabilizing force that insists people must increasingly psychically adapt to the oppression wrought by capitalism, imperialism, climate catastrophe, etc. More importantly, beginning with Fanon acts as a forceful reminder to *us* of his insistence that any psychoanalytic praxis toward revolutionary futures necessitates "a very strict legislation [that] should be established, guaranteeing to the maximum the liberty of the patient in getting rid of every incarcerative and coercive aspect of internment."[13] If we are to engage psychoanalysis at all, it must be put in service of dismantling structures and conditions that create the possibility for the "incarcerative and coercive." Insisting that psychoanalysis begins with Fanon is also one way to ground ourselves in the material reality that psychoanalysis, like all other European "inventions," was built *because* of the theft, extraction and domination of colonized peoples and the (mis)use of their bodies and psyche for data and experimentation.[14]

The context of my graduate study in psychoanalysis had everything to do with the political necessity of beginning with Fanon. I arrived in Washington, DC to study psychology at a psychoanalytically oriented program having just turned 21 and having just graduated from the American University of Beirut (AUB). Relocating for graduate school to the settler colony of the United States recalibrated my positionality into an "international student." Unexpectedly, I also became a political refugee for the second time in my life after the settler state now known as Israel started ferociously bombing Lebanon on July 12, 2006. Because of our settler Canadian citizenship, my family and I were notified that we were to be evacuated at 9 am on July 27, 2006. The voice on the phone from so-called Montreal said: "There is a boat today at 2 pm from the port. Go there. You are only allowed 10 kilos." I spent the next hours painstakingly choosing

my sanctioned 10 kilos, a mix of sentimentality and projected utility for my upcoming time in the settler state I had never previously visited.

The psychoanalyst I saw for treatment in graduate school always insisted my “trauma” was that of dislocation, stemming from the “war” in Lebanon. This depoliticized and defanged psychological reading was formulaic and fell flat. As a Lebanese Arab engaged in solidarity struggles for Palestinian liberation as well as anti-imperialist struggles against American Empire at the height of the Iraq invasion, I was instead attuned to the internal and external disruptions happening in graduate study burdened by the myth of “neutrality” and the insidious split between the social, the political, and the psychic that is largely peddled by North American/Euro-centric psychoanalytic education and practice. If there were any trauma to speak of it was the one incurred by the daily violences of settler colonial and imperial saturation in graduate school, much of which appeared seemingly undetectable to most of my cohort, let alone the “expert” psychoanalysts training me. Not only did this brand of psychoanalysis feel hypocritical, but also pointedly oppressive against the backdrop of what was happening both locally and globally. It was pointedly oppressive against the knowledge that I had just been on a boat and on a six-hour bus ride that took us to sleep in a stadium in Turkey, boarded a chartered flight to Canada with a Post-It note as my boarding pass, and then made my way to so-called Washington, DC for graduate school. The way the move unfolded did not happen because of a natural disaster but rather due to Zionist settler colonialism and US imperialism. The pointedness is precisely why I would never have thought to describe it as an individual trauma, a theoretical morass that has tried over and over again in my career to disconnect me from the political condition that creates suffering. My psychoanalyst, like many others, wanted my trauma without my being able to name the traumatizer; an empty label meant to pacify their theoretical itch vs. a material analysis that could serve to disrupt the structure responsible for the diagnosis in which they were so deeply invested.

Experiences like this allowed me quickly to learn the coercive social codes that fed into my field’s own professional codes: I was expected to

abandon this history—and most importantly the United States' hand in shoring up the 2006 Zionist siege of Lebanon, for example—behind. Leave it behind as in "not use it defensively." Leave it behind and "be careful not to make your Jewish and Israeli classmates uncomfortable with your political agenda." Leave it behind as in the "Sabra and Shatila [massacres] were *only* a matter of a PR crisis for Israel," as one social psychology book proclaimed. I was directly and indirectly told that this skill, this leaving it behind, would act as the quintessential marker of my "readiness" for induction into psychological professionalism. As in the conference room more than a decade later, the ability to willfully cleave the sociopolitical by transforming everything into a containable clinical soundbite and analytic was a resource in which much pride was taken. As it turns out, it was a resource I woefully lacked, much to the chagrin of my professors, supervisors, and many of my apolitical cohort-members. They were here to *learn* and my pesky interjection of material reality was disrupting that. "Does everything always have to be about ———?"

Everything in my subjectivity, in my large curls, in my racialized being as a post-9/11 Arab woman, and in the group and relational dynamics that speaking about these issues instigated, *knew* this limited functionality in the service of Eurocentric fantasies could not be all psychoanalysis had to offer. And if it was all it had, I was unwilling to efface my politics to conform. This is where I "met" Fanon. His work represented a "coming home" of sorts; a visceral knowledge, affirmation, and validation of what disalienation meant and, importantly, a distinctly psychoanalytic grammar and logic from the global South to organize the jarring psycho-political incoherence I felt each time I was told race, class, and gender politics were separate phenomena and did not belong in either psychic or clinical space.

No backstory is complete without conflict and decision points. A crucial part of mine—and a recurring theme in this book—is how I was drawn into, and at times struggled to identify, negotiate, and resist the carceral disciplining of myself and others through the language of psychoanalytic theory and its technical jargon. My political and affective commitment to Fanon's work took shape during a time when I most intensely felt the active

seduction into this type of ideologically forged professionalism—one designed to reproduce a normative social order under the saviorism of a helping profession. Based on my own experience, this book will insist, with intentional repetition, that, in the crosshairs of violent repressive systems that work only to ensure their longevity, as Fanon reminds us,[15] we will repeatedly be coaxed, seduced, and invited into their stabilizing efforts. Most insidiously, this stabilization will not always be apparent as a coercive process because it is meant to make its incursion into our interiority seamlessly, remaining undetected. In this way, "the colonized subject is at constant risk of being disarmed …."[16]

Fanon's work helped me stave off the full and uncritical internalization of this position in the same ways I hope this book can, counter-arming us with this knowledge and clarity about the colonizer's intent to harm. His work helped me to excavate a space to understand the specific historical configurations of racial, class, and gender hierarchies in the settler colony of the United States, as well as their resultant psychic and material impacts. Fanon's psychoanalytic method, unlike that brandished by Eurocentric psychoanalysts, did not demand the split between the clinic and the street, theoretically or in praxis. Rather, his work provided a blueprint for ethical engagement with the sociopolitical moment in a way that was decidedly not a distraction from "the work," or the gold standard of psychoanalytic "working through,"[17] but rather an integral and constitutive piece of being and living as a politically engaged clinician.

The work illuminated the liberatory potential of psychoanalysis in an unrelenting attention to both the wreckage brought on by colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy as well as the knowledge that lifeworlds were possible beyond those dictated or performed by those in (psychoanalytic) power. It is no wonder that Fanon continues to be actively erased in psychoanalytic circles and training, or that now, in his so-called "renaissance" in the Eurocentric imaginary, he is cynically intellectualized and retooled to justify liberal positions on the Zionist settler state's current genocide in Palestine.[18]

WTF: WHY PSYCHOANALYSIS?

In this book, I will be discussing the necessity of "seizing" psychoanalysis —what I call, a *despecialization* of psychoanalysis. I will argue that the work of psychoanalytic meaning-making must be wrenched from the clutches of its corrupt ruling class, or what Stephen Sheehi and myself have called "the colonial republic of psychoanalysis."[19] If there *is* to be a thing as psychoanalysis, in theory, method or practice, it must be one that is retooled such that its relevance can accompany the global uprisings against both creeping fascism and its full-throttled forms. In Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar's words, "our task is to connect social struggle with the kind of unavoidable internal struggle described by psychoanalytic theory."[20]

In his rousing *Can the Monster Speak?*, a transcription of the infamous speech he gave at the Ecole de la Cause Freudienne's annual conference in Paris, trans scholar and psychoanalytic critic Paul Preciado similarly states:

> my mission is the revenge of the psychoanalytic and psychiatric "object" (in equal measure) over the institutional, clinical and micropolitical systems that shore up the violence wreaked by the sexual, gender and racial norms. We urgently need clinical practice to transition. This cannot happen without a revolutionary mutation in psychoanalysis, and a critical challenge of its patriarchal-colonial presuppositions.[21]

Following Preciado's lead, my commitment to seizing psychoanalysis for revolution from the clinic to the streets is not a redemption story for psychoanalysis. Instead as I have been, for example, learning to read the logic of psychic intrusions by the Zionist settler state and its proxies—for example, what is being attempted by the show of power that insists even joy is "forbidden," policed, incarcerated[22]—I have understood that this work is about learning from the possibilities psychoanalysis, in its white supremacist colonial articulations, has foreclosed. I learn this as readily as realizing the potentiality of its utility in warding off what I will later

describe as *psychological operations* or *PSYOPS*. These PSYOPS sometimes show up in the pernicious form of settler colonial reality-bending.

I want to be clear: this despecialized version of psychoanalysis is not an adaptation; nor is it an alternate form that derives its power from a performative anti-hegemonic position. Instead, it is a commitment to the potentialities of a seized psychoanalysis, a despecialized psychoanalysis, meant to highlight a simultaneously existent multimodal process, method, and logic to which Eurocentric institutionalized psychoanalysis is, and always has been, constitutively misattuned. To borrow from Katherine McKittrick, like an uncontained Science, this mode of psychoanalysis can be thought to be "restless and uncomfortably situated and multifarious rather than definitive and downward-pressing."[23] This is the psychoanalysis of the Fanon I met two decades ago, the psychoanalysis which the Black Panther Party read, debated, and pushed upon,[24] the psychoanalysis of revolutionary freedom fighters in Turtle Island, South Africa or Palestine, who were and continue to be intimately aware of the intended porousness of the psychic terrain,[25] or of laborers who intimately understand the centrality of the psycho-politico-affective forces complicit in their exploitation.[26]

Without this commitment to despecialization and its backstory, there is fairness to the *WTF*-look or verbal challenge I sometimes get from those who discover I am "into" psychoanalysis, even if I am clear that it is to be subverted toward revolutionary ends. The WTF is even more fair without the insistence on a psychoanalysis, like that of Fanon, *already* in service of liberation and anti-colonial struggle. In fact, I am appreciative of the honesty in a WTF moment, because it is a refreshing disturbance of the otherwise more common fetishization of the field that has for more than a century perpetuated systemic harm in the name of "help." One does not have to reach backward into the violence of Nazi Germany to uncover the complicit psychoanalysts who joined in *that* genocide when we have present-day psychoanalytic violence enacted in service of *today's* genocide in Gaza.[27] If that is unconscionably not y/our focus, perhaps I can point you

to the myriad of psychoanalysts involved in the shaping of the violent anti-trans bills we see popping up across the United States.[28]

Taking up the important WTF challenge, I am insisting that a psychoanalytic theory that is not divorced from revolutionary praxis can have the capaciousness to analyze and push upon social and individual structures saturated by capitalism, imperialism, settler colonialism, cisheteronormativity, and other iterations of seemingly calcified oppression. This version of psychoanalysis can help inform how we psychically liberate ourselves from the ways in which these systems, and their attendant relational coercive processes, become lodged inside of us as normative, uncontested fixtures. Following others who have taken this challenge up in earnest, I underscore that without seizing psychoanalysis entirely, we are left with the adaptive strain and its attendant problems:

> not only that it naturalizes the order of things, making this order seem natural rather than historical, but that it makes us see the world as an external "environment" separate from each one of us. This prevents us from recognising that we are part of the world, that we are in it and of it and that we can transform it by transforming ourselves, but also transform ourselves by transforming it.[29]

The transformational potentiality of psychoanalysis, therefore, is not an intrinsic *fait accompli* of the theory itself, but rather a result of the pressures to which it must be subjected in the despecializing process. The combustive power psychoanalytic theory and praxis potentiates emerges when we pressurize it; when we transmute its limitations and forcibly unlink it from its work for power and normativity.[30] Pressurizing psychoanalysis in this way, despecializing it, follows the example that Palestinian martyr, political prisoner and revolutionary prisoner, Walid Daqqa lays out for us. Ghina Abi-Ghannam maps out for us Daqqa's concept of a "seared consciousness." In her words, "After consistently exposing consciousness to … [pressure] beyond its ability to endure it, consciousness is rendered pliable and can then be reconstructed depending on the structure that

contains it—or in the Palestinian case, the structures dictated by Zionist occupation."[31] Similarly, subjecting psychoanalysis to a searing process in which it is made to move beyond its fixedness and foreclosures creates the possibility that psychoanalysis can instead work *for us*, for Palestine, for the aim of dismantling "the structure that contains" the violence to which we are subjected.

A seared or pressurized psychoanalysis yields potentially radical insights and praxis because only then can it become the "theory with teeth" that psychoanalyst and scholar Avgi Saketopoulou speaks of—theory as a weapon, to crib Amilcar Cabral, and as stone in the case of Palestine.[32] In this simultaneously pulsating version of psychoanalysis poised for revolutionary action, the "psychoanalytic and psychiatric object" of which Preciado speaks, must seize the means of psychoanalytic production; both the praxis of psychoanalytic therapy and the theoretical framework and method that structure it as a profession and mode of thinking and action. In my study, I do not think of this in terms of technical manuals designed for specialists, but rather a roadmap (one of potentially, hopefully, many) for the ways in which a despecialized psychoanalysis, rather than clinging desperately to power, transmutes into a politically pointed and relevant tool, intervention, and disruption in service of larger revolutionary, liberatory struggles.

I am certainly not the first to assert the claim that psychoanalysis can lend itself to revolution; even a reactionary theory and practice such as psychoanalysis has its list of radical thinkers and interventionists, beginning foremost with Frantz Fanon, but also including free clinics at the time of Freud, revolutionary Marxist psychoanalytic cadres at the time of Otto Fenichel, Otto Rank, and Wilhelm Reich, anarchist organizing in the time of Otto Cross, anti-fascist resistance in Argentina as with Marie Langer, or psychoanalytic theorizing as centerpiece to the anti-psychiatry movement of Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze. Later there were people like Joel Kovel, an avowedly anti-Zionist Jewish psychoanalytic theorist. Perhaps not surprisingly, despite this history, not only are these thinkers and clinicians rarely—if ever—taught as part of formal psychoanalytic training but,

importantly, they are treated as dissidents to be derided and disqualified from the clinical canon (which is also why they are welcome in non-applied academic homes within anti-colonial, cultural, or literary theories). On the other hand, because they are not very well known, and because psychoanalysis has been more concerned with its power than its relevance, very rarely do we see these theorists mobilized in the street. Put more simply, the mainstream and/or hegemonic practice of psychoanalysis has not been exorcised of its elitism or constitutive colonial logics and therefore revolutionary movements often steer clear of it.[33]

The demand this book makes of psychoanalysis is a political demand. It is a political demand on me and others in practice who must refuse the contours of an oppressive psychoanalytic method that works in tandem with carceral, settler colonial, imperial and/or fascist state building and stabilizing efforts. It is a political demand to divest from the seductions of a normative psychoanalysis that insists that its knowledge remain sequestered in the clinic and in the ranks of its "properly trained" psychoanalysts[34]—the very same ones who often miserably fail to attend to material conditions even as they unfold in real time, as they did at the 2017 conference detailed at the beginning of this chapter. It is a political demand to work against the liberal humanistic desire to collapse the material realities in which each of our subjectivities exist into mere individually located pathologies. It is a political demand for psychoanalysis to "cash out" on the promises it has made theoretically and emerge as one of many liberatory tools in our arsenal that uplifts freedom-dreaming and freedom-building, to borrow from Robin D.G. Kelley.[35]

It is only here, in its despecialized form, that the theory and practice earmarked as uniquely attuned to unconscious psychic processes of fantasy and play can become the space in which we rehearse and enact a psycho-politico-affective economy of revolutionary possibilities that we can *insist* will become realities, as I discuss in Chapter 4 on psychic militancy. That is, in despecializing psychoanalysis, in seizing the means of its production, psychoanalytic praxis is no longer merely trapped in the realm of the clinic or intrapsychic, but rather the bedrock on which a politico-relational matrix

of rehearsal of the material world, in the streets, *as we want to see it*, to crib from Lauren Berlant, can begin to emerge. In this way, the book is not for the psy-disciplines or colleagues, but for comrades. It is about expropriating professional knowledge to arm us in our long struggle against global fascism and the oppressive systems it mobilizes. The beauty of dwelling, organizing, and working in this space is that you come to learn of contemporary comrades from Palestine to Lebanon, to Brazil, to India, to Chile, to Cyprus, to the Philippines, to Turtle Island, who are struggling alongside you/us. And, you reclaim the radical traditions of health practitioners that were forcibly displaced from our canon, from our training, and from the cultural archive of which Edward Said speaks. There has always been a Comandanta Ramona, a Che Geuvara, a Frantz Fanon, a Khalida Jarrar, a Walid Daqqa, a George Jackson, an Assata Shakur, who through their political engagement, speaking, and writing have despecialized experiential, psychic, *and* clinical knowledge in service of collective liberation. There have always been revolutionaries, psychoanalysts and otherwise, who have refused the split between the psychic and the political. They just never have been welcomed into the purview of a non-despecialized psychoanalysis.

I am not asking the reader to consider this retooled and despecialized psychoanalysis from a disconnected or ungrounded vacuum. The ways in which I came to distill what I am calling the psychic grammar of psychic intrusions emerges from my history—some of which I have detailed above—but also more recently as someone who has had to wade through this territory myself as the target of a Zionist smear campaign by a notorious pro-Zionist astroturf organization hellbent on harm.[36] Following in the tradition of the arduous labor of intellectuals like Steven Salaita to track the logics and intricacies of Zionist violence,[37] I challenged myself to organize this ordeal through my understanding of psychoanalysis. I used psychoanalytic theory to organize how this attack, though individualized in this form, fits into a larger framework and logic of smear campaigns that themselves fit into the larger Zionist imprint in the settler colony of the United States, whether that is through the criminalization of the Student

Intifada or the state-sponsored terrorizing, demonization and disappearance of pro-Palestine activists.[38]

To not be distracted by the (real) violence directed toward me, to not be seduced into the atomizing pull of violent systems, and to remain grounded in my political imperative—my commitment to Palestine's full and complete liberation—it became vital for me to engage in a disciplined practice of warding off psychic intrusions; to continuously and militantly remain clear on how these methods become ways in which settler colonialism, and especially Zionist settler colonialism, work in cahoots with United States settler colonialism as a fundamentally expansionist project.[39] I had to challenge myself to de-individualize and recognize the pattern, the *condition,* so that I could return to the precondition, which I will outline in the coming chapters.

OK, BUT REALLY, *WHY*?

The reconstitution of a revolutionary psychoanalytic history and present is vital because mental health discourses, training, and interventions—of which psychoanalysis is a part—appear to be having a rehabilitative "moment." If not pushed to their liberatory ends, these practices can act as they always have: as self-legitimizing, disciplinary methods that police people's psyche and bodies, actively pathologizing individuals (with disproportionate violence enacted on the most peripherized among us) and mobilizing clinicians as agents of the state, as Fanon warned. At worst, they work as the foundational specialized knowledge of nefarious counterinsurgency interventions meant to derail collective action. Heeding Palestinian revolutionary and martyr Bassel Al-Araj's call to be as much an "engaged intellectual"[40] as an engaged clinician, despecialization of psychoanalytic praxis—seizing psychoanalysis for revolution— is the precondition for its liberatory potential. More concretely, learning to read psycho-politico-affective processes, naming the psychic violence they intend to enact, distilling this method, and disseminating it with the explicit

political intent of psychically arming the revolution is how we continue to force the mutation of psychoanalysis, from the clinic to the streets.

I must reiterate that this book is not meant to recuperate, salvage, or argue for psychoanalysis in its institutionalized hegemonic form. Nor is it meant to claim that psychoanalysis, even outside its institutions, is the only method or theory that can speak with the acuity and precision needed to apprehend the challenges facing revolutionaries and militants committed to the transformation of our increasingly dire social and political conditions. By laying out and appropriating the professional knowledge that I have accrued over the fifteen years I have been engaged in psychoanalytic practice, I do not intend to massage it into a more "palatable," pedestrian, or commodifiable theory and method. I do not believe any singular theory or method is sacred, nor do I believe it can do the work we want it to without subjecting it to the constant pressure of political struggle. My approach is therefore not meant to abstract the theory of psychoanalysis or to give it a rad-chic makeover. It is similarly not meant to distance myself as a practitioner, and especially not the larger field of psychoanalysis, from the mounting critical discourses around how mental health more broadly, and psychoanalysis specifically, has been used historically to oppress marginalized, racialized, gendered, and colonized populations. To the contrary, it is no secret that the psy-disciplines more broadly have diligently worked in service of policing people's psyche and bodies. Sometimes this has been done by explicitly lending psychoanalytic thought to the overthrow of leftist governments as with Freud's nephew Edward Bernays[41] (discussed further in Chapter 1) or by forming a hate group that aims to snuff out trans life and futures.[42] Most times the violent work of psychoanalysis is done through "soft" methods, as in regularizing and legitimizing a *mission civilisatrice* discourse or theorizing about the pathology of colonized peoples.

In short, I am not a psychoanalytic missionary. Nor am I interested in any conserving or conservative project of proselytizing its virtues. As a psychoanalytically trained clinical psychologist, the focus of this book on psychoanalysis is in many ways a practical one; it is a focus that allows me

both to remain within the realm of my own "discipline" while also marshaling a critique that is forged through the disciplining process of the profession in which I was brought up. It is also one of the ways I can concretely engage in the ethical imperative to redistribute the knowledge and labor that has been stolen, extracted, and coerced out of minoritized and colonized peoples who, for more than a century, have been the subjects of psychoanalytic study as well as its target for violence. At the time of writing, the profession of psychoanalysis not only has a sordid past, but also an equally terrifying present that includes working to shore up fascistic creep in the form of mainstreaming Zionist violence and, as I mentioned earlier, aiding in the articulation and implementation of anti-trans legislation.[43]

I borrow from Amilcar Cabral, grounding myself in the knowledge that "every practice produces a theory, and that if it is true that a revolution can fail even though it be based on perfectly conceived theories, nobody has yet made a successful revolution without a revolutionary theory."[44] While I am most definitely not suggesting that psychoanalysis becomes the organizing or exclusive theory of revolutionary struggle, I am interested in beginning to articulate what a forceful seizing of psychoanalysis toward revolutionary ends might mean, in the same ways revolutionaries like Che Guevara worked to despecialize medicine. As Che reminds us in his seminal piece "On Revolutionary Medicine," "today one finally has the right and even the duty to be, above all things, a revolutionary doctor, that is to say a man who utilizes the technical knowledge of his profession in the service of the revolution and the people."[45] Similarly, the work of what are broadly referred to as "the helping professions" must include the revolutionary work of alleviating material suffering. To me, this cannot be done without the wrenching of specialized and professional knowledge from the hands of the overclasses that hoard and gatekeep it.

I am making this intervention more than two decades after being revolutionized by Che's mandate for several reasons. First, we are currently living in a moment where mental health discourse is being mainstreamed, not surprisingly, primarily in modes and modalities that shore up, stabilize,

and legitimize neoliberal and capitalist enterprise through the gentle guise of psychological nomenclature. What I mean by this is that psychological practice, of which psychoanalysis is a subcategory, is not only by and large practiced in a depoliticized, defanged, and domesticated manner, but also explicitly deployed (no matter whether consciously or unconsciously) with the intent to stabilize a sociopolitical order at the center of which is an atomized *individual*. It is no wonder that the self-help industry is worth billions. This achievement is not an accidental by-product of capitalism, but rather an *intent* as Fanon warned us. Psychologists—and I would argue by extension any clinical or healthcare worker who is beholden to the state—run the risk of becoming "'confusion-mongers', interven[ing] between the exploited and the authorities."[46] With this in mind, what I concretely aim to articulate in this book is my own attempt at despecializing psychoanalytic theory and tools to read *process*, no matter how imperfectly or non-comprehensively. I try to make explicit through a specialized knowledge both what could be unfolding psycho-affectively in processes of psychic intrusions as well as what is ideologically being coerced via psychic and affective channels. It is to despecialize the process that otherwise might go undetected.

As with all my work, this project is a political project. Or, as I stated earlier, a political demand. It insists that for us to do political work, for us to be able to stay the course in the face of oppressive structures and their demobilizing and demoralizing mechanics, we must apprehend the centrality of the psychic terrain. This is what, following Fanon, I have come to call the *psycho-politico-affective*. Only here can a despecialized psychoanalytic method or analytic become one of many tools in an arsenal that we will all need to fight fascism.

A NOTE ON TENOR

Throughout the book, I am speaking directly to comrades who are engaged in all modes of struggle against fascism; comrades who are committed to dismantling all modes of exploitation, domination, and coercion on which

oppressive systems rely to exact their violence. When I refer to “we” or “us,” I am not speaking to colleagues in the psy-disciplines but rather to those of us who have revolutionary leftist political commitments.

I will ask us to militantly locate ourselves within the psycho-politico-affective pull of individualist rot and coercive exploitation of late-stage capitalism, US imperialism (and its violent decline), anti-migrant violence in the USA and extrajudicial killings in Latin America, the ongoing genocides in Palestine, in Sudan, in the Congo, accelerating climate catastrophe, and all forms of wretched violence against bodies and psyches that are intended to be monopolized by the state. Like Zupančič,[47] I have come to understand what Freud termed *Verleugnung*—disavowal, a process by which someone on an unconscious level acknowledges reality but also engages in splitting it off from awareness—as an increasingly central process in maintaining the current social order. My intent to locate us repetitiously in our material reality is meant to be a practice in reclaiming the psychic disavowals into which we are so eagerly socialized. The reading process itself is meant to be a practice of stamina against the impulse to split-off and disavow material reality to maintain psychic and affective equilibrium.

What I am interested in doing is insisting on a militant dwelling space, one in which we can practice how to ward off this primary psychic channel of violence; not only so that we can learn that disavowal is a politically demobilizing process but also to recognize in real time when we are being silenced or conscripted into its grip and, more importantly, *why*. This book is a political project and demand precisely because we need a counterforce to the political project of psychic intrusion, exploitation, and domination. We need to become more aware of all the ways in which our psychic apparatus is coopted to perpetuate the very repressive social order that so many of us are eager to dismantle. Through this, we are immediately in the realm of praxis, a refrain I hope to come back to over and again in this book: a pointed and purposeful repetition—dare I say, a purposeful turning of repetition compulsion on its head precisely because it is a centerpiece of psychoanalytic theory. In seizing the repetition compulsion[48]—repeating in

action what is otherwise repressed—I am insisting on the forcefulness that is required for us to dislodge the violent imprints of our world. I attempt to lay out examples to help us practice together what a repetitive reclamation of disavowals can look like just as readily as I attempt to lay out how perniciously seductive "forgetting" can be.

If we are serious about revolutionary futures, we *must* think about how the psycho-politico-affective work of these violent systems impress on our psyches, insisting not only on being felt but on becoming normative fixtures within the topography of our internal worlds. Through the seizing of psychoanalysis, I aim to map out what has become clear to me as a central node of revolutionary demobilization through the explicit exploitation of the psychic realm, sometimes merely through the activation of confusion, fear, and despair. To be more specific, in despecializing psychoanalytic method to, for example, detect and counter the intrusive violence of Zionism, or to trace how imperialism works by also lodging itself within us, we can aid our movements in demystifying the logics by which oppressive ideologies and practices pursue the psychic with intent to intrude upon it. We can understand this aim as the quotidian and yet equally violent arm of "psychological operations" that we usually associate with governments, their militaries, or para-state actors. This book aims to forcibly capture and retool psychoanalysis, recognizing the realm of the psychic as being intimately linked up with the violent intrusion of oppression as well as in the theoretical framing *and* direct action of revolutionary movements and struggles. More specifically, *From the Clinic to the Streets* is written within the context of the global rise of fascism, climate disaster, and imperial techno-feudalism within a new stage of late-industrial capitalism. But if this book is written in the conditions of this neo-Malthusian global racial capitalism, it is also written in a new spirit of global internationalism and the expanding conversation around abolitionist, anti-capitalist and anti-racist possibilities for the future.

My hope is that in this articulation of a despecialized psychoanalytic knowledge, we can keep track of—be aware of, note, recognize, attune to—what it feels like to not immediately, at least, reach for the escape hatches

that dislocate, dismember, and dissociate us from the pain and suffering in which we must be implicated if we are to usher in revolutionary futures. I have a deeper hope that this book can be one of many spaces of practice, of re-membering, and re-associating with the intent of building up the psychic stamina and clarity—what I detail later as psychic militancy—we will need to face fascism head on. In this way, I follow in the footsteps of others like Micha Frazer-Carroll, who asks how can we transform "alienating and debilitating experiences and turn them outwards to politicise them?"[49] My goal in detailing my understanding of a despecialized psychoanalytic method is not only to add one more weapon to sustain our critique of systemic violence but also work to take direct action(s) against it. Here I hope to offer something, however small, to the already vast and ever-growing set of knowledge practices (especially from the global South) that aim not only to reclaim the methods that have domesticated and demobilized our revolutionary struggles—whether through formal means such as PSYOPS or through soft power in the form of professionalization—but also to transfigure psychoanalysis' dimensions such that it becomes a *weapon* against the psychic intrusion central to all forms of violence.

I have chosen this approach not as a reformist intervention, but rather a materialist one, acknowledging that the psy-disciplines, if not pressurized in these ways, readily offer themselves as disciplinary methods, actively pathologizing individuals and entire revolutionary movements.[50] They exist as counter-operatives to the revolutionary disruption of oppressive systems and logics by operationalizing the psycho-politico-affective in ideally undetectable, that is, seamless, methods and modes. Learning from my comrade Ian Parker, rather than believing we can just jettison psychoanalysis amid infrastructure that actively shores up its counter-revolutionary efforts, "radical psychoanalysis offers a diagnosis of our alienation from nature that is also a diagnosis of the false paths we take when we try to either dominate it or merge with it."[51]

Put differently, if we understand that there is an always-already infrastructure of violence that is suffused with knowledge about how the psyche works, my hope is that we can begin to think about how to use

psychoanalytic knowledge and method to form countertechnologies of violence, mobilizing these theories as stones, in Stephen Sheehi's words, so that the theory can become a material projectile in the world.[52]

Learning to read and, more importantly, *disrupt* what I will be calling the psychic grammar of this violence has emerged as an increasingly urgent project, especially as so many of us have witnessed the live-streamed genocide in the Gaza Strip in Palestine. While this book was conceived prior to the most recent phase of genocide against Palestinians, the acceleration of Zionist aggression across Palestine and toward pro-Palestine (or merely anti-genocide) solidarity has compelled me toward a deeper study of how the province of the psyche is a pointed target of such systems of oppression as Zionism. Tellingly, much of the clinical and process material I use in this book will refer to Palestine and to the genocide. While there are specificities to Palestine that cannot be generalized to other situations or geographies, my hope is that we may begin to unveil a prevailing logic to psychic intrusions, psycho-politico-affective violence and, most importantly, psychic refusals and militancy. The invitation, then, is not to exclusivize Palestine or to read this as a manual only against the intrusiveness of Zionism, but rather to galvanize a psychic inoculation against the conditions that created Zionism in the first place—the same conditions that created imperialism, racial capitalism, cisheteronormativity, ableism, and all other pernicious forms of domination, exploitation and coercion. Tracing the familiar logic helps arm us in our ever urgent fight against the global rise in fascism.

Much of what is discussed in these pages, I must admit, might seem rudimentary, obvious, or basic. And yet all of us have stories of how even the most elementary analyses that guide our political convictions and interventions in the abstract are some of the most difficult to access in a moment of crisis or confrontation. That is, it is not for lack of conviction or political commitments that we succumb to psychic intrusions; it is more that psychic intrusions become lubricated through various methods of carceral discipline, occluding access to a vast knowledge set that can be mobilized against violence. The aim of despecializing psychoanalytic process and

method is to provide at least one version of how we can come to refuse these psychic intrusions—both internal and external—so that we are more likely to retain the capacity for clarity, or psychic militancy.

1
Warfare Psychologically Waged

On December 15, 1950, Dr. Paul M.A. Linebarger delivered a speech entitled “Psychological Warfare” at the Naval War College in the United States (US). He lamented that the practice of psychological operations was still nascent and, together with his fellow military men, imagined a more prosperous future for the field. “Warfare psychologically waged,” he said, “should it ever appear, might be a weapon in its way as novel and terrifying as the V-2 or the atomic bomb.”[1] Linebarger’s goal was lofty, but he assured his colleagues that “warfare psychologically waged” was the future, insisting that if the US wanted to be effective in its missions *across the world*, it would increasingly need to focus on this line of research and intervention. In fact, by the time Linebarger gave his lecture, the US had started to expand and consolidate its global military presence, not the least of which was its military intervention into the Korean War in the summer of 1950. Whether in Europe, where it was increasingly building troop presence and intelligence bases in what was then West Germany, its military intervention in Korea, or its military intrigues throughout the global South, where liberation struggles against colonial powers and their indigenous ruling lackeys were escalating, the US military had been working steadily toward concretizing a psychological warfare—or PSYOPS—unit that would become increasingly central to military interventionism in the following decades. According to Peter Watson, this was an important development because the United States was “behind” in focusing on PSYOPS in comparison to the United Kingdom and the settler state now known as Israel, both of which had outstripped the US in research and experimentation in this realm.[2] It did not take long for the US to catch up.

By the late 1950s, the US military, working in lockstep with the burgeoning field of military psychology, had quickly advanced not only their PSYOPS research but also their interventions “at home” and in the sovereign countries they were attempting to dominate. The fruits of this labor were concretized by 1953 in their MKUltra program, a series of psychological torture and brainwashing experiments developed and administered by psychoanalytically trained psychiatrists working for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).[3] PSYOPS were also famously epitomized in the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) warfare starting in 1956 against radical left liberation movements, with focus on the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the American Indian Movement, Third World Liberation Front groups like the Brown Berets, unions like United Farm Workers, and the Puerto Rican liberation movement, the Young Lords.[4]

Orisanmi Burton informs us that by 1961 the director of the US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) was attending PSYOPS symposia titled “The Power to Change Behavior,” convincing him that “coercive persuasion” should be used by prison administrators “to experiment on recalcitrant Black Muslims.”[5] By 1963, PSYOPS advancements had become so notable that the US Department of Defense (DoD) held its inaugural “Worldwide PSYOPS Conference” detailing their plans for top-priority forthcoming research. By 1964, the US Director of Defense Research and Engineering greenlighted a covert research project by the Advanced Research Projects Agency called, “Research in the behavioral and social sciences relevant to counterinsurgency and special warfare.”[6] Just shy of its twenty-year anniversary, the Society for Military Psychology (a Division of the American Psychological Association that exists to this day) detailed its own understanding of this radical shift in the military’s focus and reach in that month’s issue of *American Psychologist*. Their reasoning was as pragmatic as it was nefarious. “The growing recognition of the cultural influences on man would mean a switch from an emphasis on human engineering to cultural engineering. Communication would become even more important as a weapon.”[7] The assertion is telling

considering that military psychologists were instrumental in US torture sites, including Guantánamo Bay, in the decade following 9/11, and the chief psychological torture architect James Mitchell—who personally engaged in waterboarding—stated as recently as 2020 that he would "do it again."[8]

Around the same time, the centrality of PSYOPS for the synergistic goals of empire and the maintenance of settler colonialism (whether domestically in the US or in client states such as the state now known as Israel) was steadily congealing. In an especially telling and rare documentation of the collaboration between these iniquitous bedfellows, Watson reports—with no irony—on a diabolical experiment that the prominent US-based behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner influenced:

> Professor B. F. Skinner was given a defence grant to develop a scheme whereby pigeons could be trained to guide missiles onto targets. Skinner had found as early as 1944 that pigeons in flight could distinguish man-made objects from naturally occurring ones. This finding began to interest the Israelis towards the end of the sixties. An American psychologist who spent some time in Israel developed an adapted system in which the pigeons could effectively be used as spies against the Arabs. They were trained to fly over Arab-held territory, kitted out with small radio direction-finders, and land on or near man-made objects. They could even follow moving columns, looking for food. The radio direction-finders of course told the Israelis exactly where the birds, and whoever they were following, were located.[9]

As early as the 1940s, psychological "research" in the USA was being used for what Burton calls "programmification"[10]—"state orchestrated assaults on Black revolutionary minds"[11]—and to develop surveillance technology and population control techniques, as well as to aid in the oppression of indigenous peoples from Turtle Island to Palestine. Psychologists working with the military's engineered PSYOPS were pointedly aligned with the expansion of empire and the shoring up of settler colonial projects "at

home" and in their outposts, like in the settler state occupying Palestine. The systematized machinery of "warfare psychologically waged" that Linebarger dreamed up in 1950, quickly became a thriving business and project that needed psychologists and other psy-professionals to transform it into a legitimate arm of the state—about which Frantz Fanon was already sounding an alarm more than 4,000 miles away. This was the "cultural engineering" military psychologists and PSYOPS specialists spoke of—the curation of a social order that would consolidate power in the hands of those who had the means to expropriate psychological know-how while retaining the appearance that this power was established through "fair" means, such as inherent superiority or God-given rights.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYOPS

While every postwar state explored and experimented with this newly developed mode of warfare, we should single out the US empire as the largest purveyor of PSYOPS and counterinsurgency programs to destabilize leftist movements particularly in Latin America, as historian Alex Aviña has highlighted,[12] as well as in the global South more broadly and within the US. As Carter J. Carter boldly illustrates, we should also be clear on who were the "psy-warriors" (as Watson terms them)[13] intimately involved in this sordid business. Namely, he tells us, "it was psychoanalysts who came up with the modern theory and practice of propaganda in the first place."[14] While behavioral psychologists played a role in the creation of and experimentation with PSYOPS in the early years, importantly for this book, so did *psychoanalysts*. While Tavistock/A.K. Rice Institute-trained psychoanalyst Louis Jolyon West was inducing dissociation through hypnosis, substances, and sensory experiments in the 1950s,[15] one of the most famous figures of psychological warfare was none other than Sigmund Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, who had long ago begun his PSYOPS work. Two decades prior to the greenlighting of covert PSYOPS research in the United States, Bernays was busy collating and distilling his uncle's psychoanalytic theories and method to better understand and, more

importantly, *apply*, propaganda. That is, rather than being theoretical or passive, Bernays was modeling that "PSYOPS are applicatory in nature and these are related to the conditioning of the mind of the target group."[16]

The term "psychological warfare" was said to have first been used in 1920 by J.F.C. Fuller, who wondered whether this version of warfare would come to fully supplant what then was considered "traditional" military warfare. He posits:

> the so called traditional means of warfare might be replaced by pure psychological warfare, wherein weapons are not used or battlefields sought … but dimming of the human intellect and the disintegration of the moral and spiritual life of one nation by the influence of the will of another is accomplished.[17]

While the fantasy of psychic infiltration and expansion was well under way then, it was the Freudian heir Bernays who, in the following decades, mainstreamed and popularized the concept of PSYOPS by explicitly capitalizing on the legitimizing soft power of his uncle's psychoanalysis.

The soft power of psychoanalysis, tellingly, had the material consequence of transmuting into the hard power of state oppression, with Bernays playing a key role in both the US and the United Fruit Company's violence and plunder in Latin America. In Carter's sharp analysis, to do this:

> Bernays relied heavily on Freud in theorizing the new propaganda of "public relations," including on Freud's thinking on the primal horde—he felt people were liable to behave like a herd, and he proposed that psychoanalysis and rhetoric could be used in tandem to direct the herd as the propagandist saw fit, to "engineer their consent …."[18]

Bernays was also integral to the counterinsurgent psychological terror that was used to incite a coup in Guatemala, crushing revolutionary forces that were resisting imperial domination.[19] Bernays waged this war by utilizing

mass organized misinformation campaigns, smear campaigns against leftists, activation of fear among the larger population, and the purposeful sowing of doubt—all tactics which fell under the category of psychological warfare, and which he documented in several books in which he unabashedly touted his propagandist skills.[20] Not surprisingly, these very same tactics form the basis of the counterinsurgent PSYOPS interventions still used in the present day, whether by the Zionist entity which wages violent misinformation and smear campaigns against students and faculty; or the US imperial war machine's targeting of leftist or revolutionary movements within the empire or in other countries; or related to US "immigration policies" and over-policing especially on the US–Mexico border, what Alex Aviña denotes as, "the most dangerous migrant route in the world, awash in counterinsurgent military technology, border police who brutalize migrants with impunity, and weaponized landscapes like the Sonoran Desert."[21] PSYOPS, as was the intention of their architects, came to fit neatly into a matrix of counterinsurgency technologies that shore up settler colonialism and US empire, hegemony, and oppression.

As one of the most prominent psychoanalysts with a legitimizing Freudian familial tie, Bernays had set the stage for a field that would see exponential growth and sharpened "interventions" for maximal impact over the following decades. Over time, PSYOPS came to be imagined as an everyday practice and intervention, not exclusive to "active" military missions. That is, PSYOPS were conceived of as being perpetual—waged during war but, importantly for this book and the work of what I call psychic intrusions, also *during peace*, a parallel process of the intensity and frequency of the applied practice of psychoanalysis. By functioning in the backdrop of everyday life, PSYOPS were meant to become the conduit to ideological coercion; the seamless psychic impression that could massage personal and collective identifications, and, importantly, disrupt and derail revolutionary organizing and action. This goal is corroborated by the 2024 "complementary" publication of the US military field manual for PSYOPS which unabashedly states, "tactical necessity requires Psychological Operations forces be able to execute their skills and capabilities in

conjunction with a variety of missions during combat operations, *peacetime operations, and foreign humanitarian assistance*."[22]

Rather than just imagining that PSYOPS are utilized in active war situations, as Bernays laid out decades prior, we can instead recognize that these operations are woven into a tapestry of hard-and soft-power interventions of empire, colonialism, and settler colonialism. This has set the stage for a seamless normalization of PSYOPS, insinuating tactical psychic knowledge into the everyday business of "regular" people such that our psychic terrain is aptly primed for intrusion. As Narula poignantly captures, "while normal warfare aims at defeating the enemy through physical damage, psywar aims to conquer the 'minds and hearts' of the people in the symbolic conflict that always complements the military one"[23] — emerging as a "non-lethal force multiplier."[24] This imagery of a "force multiplier" will guide us in the following chapters to recognize how the psychic intrusions mobilized by PSYOPS are not meant to make their landing just once, or in a vacuum, but rather are purposefully utilized to instigate an internal and internal*ized* process—a hallmark theoretical tenet of psychoanalysis—that can be animated repeatedly via the psycho-politico-affective plane as we will discuss in the next chapter.

Therefore, while there was much discussion of General David Petraeus's "Hearts and Minds" strategy during G.W. Bush's 2007 "Surge" in Iraq, one forgets that the term not only has history within the War College but is also specifically a counterinsurgency strategy that the general wrote about in the *U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* which he co-authored. The US press lauded the "hearts and minds" strategy,[25] understanding it as a diplomatic and social strategy to befriend, partner with, and gain the trust of Iraqis in fighting "insurgents," rather than a complex psychological operation replete with carrots and sticks, coercion and conscription. Tellingly, the strategy sought not only to persuade but ensure that Iraqis internalized the "needs" and the necessity of US military presence for the survival of Iraq. In this way, internalization normalizes oppressive conditions, as Glen Coulthard warns, and can be detected, for example, "when the social relations of colonialism, along with the forms of

recognition and representation that serve to legitimate them, come to be seen as ‘true’ or ‘natural’ to the colonized themselves.”[26]

As Linebarger dreamed up in 1950, traditional warfare, with its singular aim of controlling or destroying concrete infrastructure and land, would not suffice if the US wanted to contend with other superpowers. Rather, “warfare psychologically waged”—the kind that Bernays regularized with his intimate knowledge of psychoanalysis—was necessary to ensure that our psychic interiority could be invaded with intent to *settle*. When carefully curated counterinsurgent sociopolitical norms and messaging “settle” within us, the longevity of a dominant social order can be maintained and ensured. Just like Fanon’s “non-thinking machine,” the longevity of oppressive systems is what is at stake and psychologists, prime among them psychoanalysts, were and continue to be willful actors in ushering in this future. As casually stated by psy-warriors themselves, “psychologists have learned one thing: that if you wish to be part of the future you must help plan that future so that it turns out the way you want it.”[27]

In this book I am interested in tracing the carefully constructed attempts of PSYOPS to settle within us. Rather than accept their power over us, we must be vigilant about their presence and the psycho-affective action(s) they instigate within us. To do this with the fervor and persistence that is needed, we must ask how we can seize psychoanalytic knowledge, wrenching it from the hands of its counterinsurgent architects—like Bernays and West—to use it in service of a psychic militancy strong enough to ensure our revolutionary futures.

THE MECHANICS OF PSYOPS

> Psychologists at war, unlike other military scientists, are less concerned with the cold finality of death and instead have to concentrate on what is often the lingering business of suffering. Fear, hate, deceit; pain, humiliation, loneliness, homesickness, envy, jealousy—this black side

> of human nature is the currency in which the psychological warfare specialist … trades.[28]

What could be a more honest confession than the callous statement that psy-warriors work to better detect, exploit, and commodify "the lingering *business* of suffering"? In Chapter 3 we will discuss specific affect states that are exploited, mobilized, and weaponized through this commodification, but for now our departure point is that there is nothing accidental about the aim, breadth, or intent of PSYOPS. While we understand PSYOPS as something more than simple propaganda, we realize that, in the establishment of the security state, it is an industry; and one primed for opportunists, war-profiteers, and charlatans. One example is Jenn Counter, a selfstyled psy-warrior and Zionist genocide enabler.[29] Counter states in a prominently displayed tactical menu for engaging in "offensive influence" that "influence is a long-term effort and inherently political in nature, not a one-off event that is grounded in military objectives."[30] Like her predecessors, Counter is clear how PSYOPS must be a sustained and expansive campaign *at all times* for their maximum impact. But also, the goal of PSYOPS is not to convince or sway through argumentation or messaging but specifically to curate ideological commitments that work against the political and revolutionary investments of movements. It is about derailing our revolutionary actions in the present as much as their persistence into the future.

Counter's work is telling not for its originality or innovativeness. Quite to the contrary, Counter's banal but concise regurgitation matter-of-factly names the intended purpose of PSYOPS. She explains how goal-driven PSYOPS are not concerned with empirical facts, justice, or reality. Rather, they are carefully constructed to naturalize domination and ensnare their target through deflection and derailment. Specifically, she states:

> The goal is not to counter your adversary. Your goal is to dominate your adversary. This is done by keeping them on the defensive. Do not give them the time, bandwidth, or opportunity to go offensive. By rotating

> concepts and messages, the adversary is forced to keep up with your timeline, your message, your pace of operations and not their own. By constantly responding to your messages, they are unable to project their own and (hopefully) use up their valuable resources trying to convince audiences your message is wrong.[31]

Mobilizing the seemingly innocent goals of "counterterrorism" and "counternarcotics," as well as the predictable jingoistic intent of "building a pro-US sentiment," Counter is clear that psychological warfare cannot exert its optimal reach without the domination that fuels its intent. It is not enough to stage a counterinformation campaign; that alone is not what allows the psychic intrusions at the heart of PSYOPS to take hold. Rather, persistent and multimodal psychic targeting is used to overwhelm with explicit intent to dominate time, resources, and, importantly for our anti-fascist and revolutionary movements, to siphon off and deplete psychic energies. "While normal warfare aims at defeating the enemy through physical damage, psywar aims to conquer the 'minds and hearts' of the people in the symbolic conflict that always complements the military one."[32] Bernays' psychoanalytic legacy lives on in theory and in application with Counter's modernday approach. Psy-warriors are the enthusiastic architects of the psycho-politico-affective plane through which all PSYOPS, and therefore psychic intrusions, make their impact in our interiority. As their confessional motto goes: "capture their minds and their hearts and souls will follow."[33] By their confession, we must become adept at disrupting the ability for psychic intrusions to take hold so that our hearts and souls can remain steadfastly committed to our revolutionary futures.

A word of warning for us: reducing or flattening PSYOPS into "brainwashing" efforts alone can be seductive but fundamentally detracts from the full reach of their intention. If we focus only on the salacious and most overt examples of PSYOPS (like MKUltra or the settler colonizing pigeons in the genocidal Zionist settler state), we may unwittingly miss their pernicious hold and may falsely believe that their engineers would be satisfied with only a "changed mind," no matter how tortuously coerced.

Rather, if we study the words and "research" of psy-warriors, we can reconstitute what we colloquially refer to as "brainwashing," becoming clear that PSYOPS gain entry through the psyche, mobilize the psycho-politico-affective plane, and ultimately induce an *action*. That intended action is not innocent and remains what fuels the obsessional sharpening and "updating" of PSYOPS with modern technological advancements and a shifting "communications" terrain, as it is often euphemistically referred to. In the most unabashed terms, PSYOPS intend to impel a counterinsurgent action, demobilize our revolutionary fervor, and derail and defang our political movements by delinking us from communal responses to oppression and by creating non-militant, atomized subjects that are easy targets. PSYOPS wage an ideological war, one intent on stabilizing structures of power that ensure empire, colonialism, settler colonialism, and racial capitalism become normalized and normative fixtures of both the material world, and our interiority—seamlessly conscripting us into doing the dirty work of these systems, as we will discuss in the next chapter.

Normative fixtures, whether material or psychic, act as contouring guardrails not only for behavior but also internalized psychic messages that drive the carceral disciplining of ourselves and others. As we will discuss in the next chapter, normative fixtures solidify identifications—psychic and libidinal investments that guide our choices and our psycho-affective energies. More, they purposefully whittle down the surety we must have in our liberated futures, instead conscripting and locking us into foreclosed possibilities that are determined by the likes of Jenn Counter and other opportunistic psy-warriors. This is a pointed strategy, as Nichipuk (tellingly quoting the RAND report on *Strategic Appraisal: The Changing Role of Information in Warfare*) reminds us: "PSYOPS are all about using information dissemination to weaken the enemy's morale and, ultimately, *to break his will to resist.*"[34] This strategy is also unabashedly detailed in the 2024 US military's *Tactical Psychological Operations Detachments and Teams Guide*:

> exploitation becomes vital to create and augment psychological effects … seek[ing] to exploit the target's existing psychological vulnerabilities to push them beyond endurance and erode and affect their mental processes. In doing so, the team can affect enemy leader decision making, subordinate willingness to follow orders, and attitudes about continued resistance.[35]

PSYOPS are meant to preemptively conscript us into exhaustion, fear, confusion, and despair even—or perhaps especially—when emergent possibilities and potentials of revolutionary struggle have not yet been expended. PSYOPS are therefore as much about co-opting and derailing the present moment as they are about preemptively disrupting any *future* attempts at, or even hopes about, resistance. By the admission of psy-warriors, the focus on vacating commitments to *future resistance* is not coincidental and should guide what our primary focus is when combating the psychic intrusions at the heart of PSYOPS.

Watson was brazen in his appraisal of this aim of PSYOPS, even if they were still a relatively nascent systematized intervention at the time of his writing. Despite the heinous experiments carried out on vulnerable populations or the concerted intent of PSYOPS always to establish a magical air of their own naturalness and inevitability, he casually reminds his readers that "there is nothing mystical or mysterious about psywar."[36] He speaks just as plainly when describing the inaugural PSYOPS manual. "Its purpose," he claims:

> was to examine how weapons designers could "enhance the psychological effects" of new weapons … [and] among many other things, how fears can be manipulated, how perceptions of military significance can be deliberately distorted, how the stresses of war can be systematically increased and even how the psychological characteristics of different racial groups can be exploited.[37]

As distasteful as their statements should be to us, we should also take psy-warriors at their word. PSYOPS is cold and calculated. It is purposeful. It is continuous. It is intentional in its targeting of our psychological states, our individual and collective psyches, and how we understand ourselves in relation to material reality in order to undermine and diminish our will to resist in the present and future.

Importantly for us and the purpose of this book, however, if there is nothing "mystical" or "mysterious" about PSYOPS, if there is "nothing new under the sun" about them, then PSYOPS can also be detectable, traceable, and combatable. Further, if we can understand that PSYOPS were formulated and weaponized using psychoanalytic and psychological "science," then we can become serious about seizing this knowledge, claiming it as one more weapon in our arsenal against oppressive systems.

TECHNIQUES OF OPPRESSION

The psycho-affective plane is the primary channel through which PSYOPS work, aiming to transform our interiority into both a conduit for violence and to create the very grammar and infrastructure that can be animated in service of their counterinsurgent aims. Dylan Rodríguez poignantly highlights: "Psychological violence and demoralization are not corollary outcomes of political-military repression. Rather, these are the conditions of everyday existence that counterinsurgency operations seek to instigate—and normalize—for targeted populations."[38] As intended by their architects, "everyday existence" is the purview of PSYOPS because "many of the techniques and devices used in psychological warfare are designed to worry the enemy, to make life more uncomfortable and to undermine morale."[39] In other words, PSYOPS are as all-encompassing and mundane as they are "unmysterious." In their own words, "persuasion and influence are the primary tools of PSYOP[S]." Attuning to this banality—namely, to how they saturate and attempt to contest every psycho-affective space in which we dwell—is a crucial skill to practice if we are to confront their attendant psychic intrusions and work toward psychic militancy. In addition to

registering their perniciousness, knowing their everyday quality also alerts us to the repetitious practice in which we must engage to counter their political intent, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The methods used by psy-warriors to saturate and contest our interiority can seem very heavy-handed (and in some cases they are) but they are also carefully studied, precise, and can hide in what are seen as benevolent reform efforts.[40] In his meticulous research, Orisanmi Burton details a systematic and multimodal coercive interventionist policy by the state, "prisoncrats," and (sometimes) well-meaning volunteer organizations, all of whom, in the words of previously "captured" revolutionary Dhoruba bin-Wahad, synergistically worked to "destroy the development of revolutionary consciousness within the prisons."[41] This exposé is especially important in our study of PSYOPS because we are often enticed to swallow the state line that these methods are used only "in war" and/or "against our [US] enemies"; what Burton shows us is the expansive definition of both "war" and of those considered enemies of the US. More specifically, he maps how PSYOPS were used in full force and with full knowledge of their intent in prisons in the US at the same time as their impact was being honed on "enemies" outside the borders of the settler state. In Burton's analysis, what he calls "programmification" was "a key tactic in the state's ongoing attempt to control, eliminate, and induce particular ways of being black,"[42] with a specific focus on "break[ing] the minds and spirits of specific targets who belonged to the class of imprisoned revolutionaries."[43] The psychological warfare needed to "induce particular ways of being black" relied on a phobogenic understanding of Blackness as Fanon teaches us, but could not be complete without the coercive methods and tools needed to curate or "persuade" subjectivity in this likeness. What Burton teaches us is that PSYOPS against imprisoned populations— which included "techniques that go by a range of imprecise names: behavior modification, coercive persuasion, brainwashing, thought reform, mind control, human programming, and so on"[44]—were key in this subjectification and "codified the prison as war on the national level."[45]

We should register what Burton's research militantly uncovers: a systematized and common practice of psychological warfare intent on derailing revolutionary political commitments, organizing, and action, both within prison walls and in the streets. That is, PSYOPS do not just include crass and overt PSYOPS interventions such as confusion-inducing "sonic deception" during field battle,[46] as deflective state narratives would have us believe. While who the "target audiences" of PSYOPS are is often classified material, most of the tactics used are not. Like Jenn Counter's online menu for influence, one does not have to look much further than the publicly available military manual on PSYOPS tactics to learn of the most popular "influential techniques" they have developed.[47] Similar to the techniques documented by Burton and those used by military psychologists at Guantánamo Bay, common PSYOPS "application" includes using (in the nonchalant order in which they are listed): glittering generalities ("appeals are directed toward such emotions as love of country and home, and desire for peace, freedom, glory, and honor"); transference ("projects positive or negative qualities of a person, entity, object, or value to another"); least of evils (insists that any other option will leave people worse off); name-calling ("seeks to arouse prejudices in an audience by labeling the object of the propaganda as something the Target Audience fears, loathes, or finds undesirable"); plain folks or common man (persuades people that the PSYOPS are actually in alignment with everyday folk); testimonials (exploits the good reputation of someone by using "quotations (in and out of context) that are cited to support or reject a given policy, action, program, or personality"); insinuation (suggestive narrative that sows doubt); presenting the other side (aligning with "minor" elements of the "enemy" position to soften the heavy-handedness); simplification ("provides simple solutions for complex problems and offers simplified interpretations of events, ideas, concepts, or personalities"); compare and contrast (used when there is a "conflict" that can be exploited); compare for similarities (attempts to coercively impart that the target audiences have already aligned with the PSYOPS by drawing false comparisons); illustrations and narratives ("an example that makes abstract or general ideas easier to

comprehend. If it is in a story form, it is a narrative"); specific instances (listing out examples); statistics (clear documentation of numbers to illustrate point); and explanations (used only if presenting a new idea).[48] "Transference" is the last remaining explicitly psychoanalytic concept detailed in the PSYOPS manual. For our purposes, however, we must be attentive to how each of these interventions capitalize on the domain of psychoanalytic theory and intervention, exploiting identifications and personal affective investments and desires, existing social relations, and adherence to social values to exact their full damage.

If the methods themselves seem rudimentary on the surface, if not embarrassingly simplistic, we are quickly snapped back to the sinister intent of PSYOPS as the manual continues to map out subsequent "influence tactics" that are used to "magnify" persuasiveness. As in 1961 when NIMH director Bertram S. Brown insisted that "coercive persuasion" should be used against "recalcitrant Black Muslims,"[49] what psy-warriors call "force multipliers" are reserved for targets that have "a lower susceptibility rating"—that is, militants, insurgents, and revolutionaries. In their words:

> the lower the susceptibility rating, the less likely a PSYOP product will be successful in influencing TA [target audience] behavior, which does not mean that the TA cannot still be influenced. [Rather], *the lower the susceptibility, the more conditions will need to be modified for behavior change to occur. Therefore, more PSYACTs [psychological operations actions] will need to be incorporated into the PSYOP series to accomplish the SPO [psychological operations objective].*[50]

That is, just like in Korea, in Guatemala, in Grenada, in Vietnam, in Iraq, in Palestine, in US gulags like Attica, in Guantánamo Bay, and in our everyday movements for revolutionary futures, the more politically committed a "target audience" is, the more "persuasion"—euphemistically articulated—is needed. These persuasion techniques can be considered "enhanced," scaled up and refined psychic warfare that carry Bernays' psychoanalytic legacy and the research of military psychologists who have

spent decades perfecting it since his death. They include the use of rewards and punishments (explicit threats matched with promises of leniency upon submission); expertise (exploiting authority to impress how harsh punishments will be); gifts ("giving something as a gift before requesting compliance," i.e. bribing); debt ("calling in past favors," i.e. coercion); aversive stimulation ("continuous punishment, and the cessation of punishment, is contingent on compliance," i.e. torture); moral appeal (exploiting people's moral commitments "to obtain compliance"); positive and negative self-feeling (exploiting affect about one's self in service of compliance); positive and negative altercasting (exploiting affect related to morals about other people); positive and negative esteem of others (coercing fear of public reprisal); fear (threats).[51] We can see why PSYOPS might work if behind every "banal" intervention there is threat or even possibility of physical threat and torture, coercion, and psychological torment.

We should attune to both the cold-hearted calculus behind PSYOPS and how they are paired with other considerably more manipulative, coercive, and brute "force multipliers." That is, the impact of PSYOPS happens at the end of a barrel of a gun, so to speak, while those in power get to claim their victory over the so-called weak-minded "target audience" they torment. We must remain attuned to this reality if for no other reason than to fully apprehend the reach of psychic intrusions and the coercive measures used in wartime as readily as "in peace." Power, with its aims of domination and social control, is cruel, and violently intent on breaking us and our movements and, as Fanon sharply outlined for us, it can do so relentlessly because "the reserves of colonialism are far richer and more substantial than those of the colonized."[52] Knowing how these reserves are intentionally mobilized allows us to work against internalizing our failures as individualistic weaknesses. Instead, we can track our vulnerabilities, or the sites of psychic intrusions, and skillfully acknowledge the fact that PSYOPS utilize all levers of power and all available infrastructure with no regard to "law" and "order," as is typically shoved down our throats. This is the basis of asymmetric warfare, where the state and all its arms, including

that which instigates psychological operations, can maintain a monopoly over violence by any means necessary. As Rodríguez reminds us:

> the extra-military realm of asymmetric warfare engages the theatres of common sense, political imagination, ideological respectability, and aesthetic sensibility. As a channeling of counterinsurgency, this form of cultural warfare attempts to police the institutional limits of the speakable and thinkable: in this sense, struggles over words, symbols, narratives and definitions of acceptable political discourse are inseparable from other arenas of counterinsurgency operations.[53]

We are not dwelling in the conspiratorial if we imagine that all our social, psychic and affective relations are susceptible to the effects of the carceral discipline intended by PSYOPS. Not only do they connote the boundaries of acceptable speech and thought, but also, as Fanon warned, reach into our past, disconnecting us from the archive of knowledge we carry about ourselves, about others, and about our revolutionary histories and ancestors, as readily as our revolutionary futures. As we will discuss further in the following chapters, it is understandably easier to detect the more obvious and explicitly violent PSYOPS—the Orwellian kinds that are most often used as examples—to alert us to the psychically intrusive work of an oppressive state. Rather than focus on this more obvious realm, this book insists that the psychic terrain is *always* being acted upon. To do this, we must practice how to attune ourselves to the more subtle expressions of PSYOPS, the ones that perniciously come to live inside of us and modify and guide our attitudes, commitments, and actions away from our revolutionary futures. From this departure point, we can despecialize the same psychoanalytic knowledge that was used to formulate PSYOPS to arm us against the counterrevolutionary work of psychic intrusions.

2
Psychic Intrusions

“Lara, I feel like I am going insane. It feels like an intense pressure on my brain, like there is a force that is pushing up against my skull, waiting to be let in.”

The first words out of my patient’s[1] mouth in that day’s session flowed breathlessly, as though the words had been tightly tethered, waiting to be unleashed with a force that matched the intensity of their content. It was approximately seven months into the Zionist settler state’s genocide in the Gaza Strip and my patient had recently joined one of the encampments that had begun to spring up across the settler colony of the United States and globally. They spent the next several sessions detailing their intuition that everyone outside the encampment—from politicians to university administrators, and certainly Zionist apparatchiks and talking heads—were attempting to infiltrate the encampments.

> Listen, I am not delusional, I don’t mean physically infiltrate, though I wouldn’t be surprised if they did that, too, you and I both know there are probably informants everywhere. I mean, they are playing a game of psychology with us. We are setting up libraries for political education and people keep saying we should read Fanon. We all know we should specifically for that reason. We spend a lot of time talking about the threats and how they take up so much brain space, but I’m telling you *even with all of this*, it feels like I am going insane.

I make an intervention that intended to both affirm material reality while acknowledging the contradiction that I intuit they also want me to

understand:

> *you* feel like you're going insane, even though you also tell me you're not delusional and you're quite aware of the forces that are targeting you. I am not hearing you hesitate to name that they're very real. And they *are* real.

They pause as they thoughtfully consider my words:

> yes. Because how could it possibly be this fucking hard to see what is *actually* happening?! I just don't get it. We watch it on our phones 24/7, but somehow it just goes "poof "?! It must be me. I know it's not, I promise, but I am telling you, feeling insane is the place I go back to every day. I think we all do.

Another patient, this one in Europe, says to me:

> I feel like I need to keep repeating to myself and I try to get others to repeat to me that *I am not crazy*. That what I am seeing is *actually* what I am seeing, otherwise I think I dissociate? Or maybe buy into the propaganda? I don't know how to describe it. I start to feel myself get confused and like we have talked about, I only feel better when I repeat to myself, out loud a lot of the times which I know sounds weird, what I *know* is true. How can it feel so hard to hold onto? It makes no sense.

We discuss the difficulty of retaining access to clarity, despite her being able to recount in excruciating detail the very texture of the reality she finds herself "weirdly" getting confused about. We discuss how bizarre this feels especially because the excruciating detail she recounts matches the rhythm of her devotion to consuming every news item, every reel, every post about the violence being done in Gaza.

"I feel like I am going insane/crazy" is a refrain I have become accustomed to hearing in and outside of sessions. The sentiment began

popping up very quickly after the Zionist settler state began its viciously murderous campaign on the Gaza Strip in October 2023. Rather than abating with the mountain of piled-up evidence of genocide at our fingertips, the pattern of confusion, sometimes referred to by people as dissociation, has persisted with what seems like the corollary intensity of the Zionist genocidal campaign. This process is what I refer to as psychic intrusion: a psychic invasion that intends to make retaining access to material reality difficult, derailing us from the political commitments needed to sustain revolutionary fervor and psychic militancy (discussed in Chapter 4). By mapping out and naming psychic intrusions, we are better able to understand the function of "I feel like I am going insane/crazy." Rather than the experience of crazy/insane being a fixed state often understood as being due to one's own inability to apprehend reality, we can think of psychic intrusions as the purposeful condensation of ideological "givens" that conscript us into the reality-bending on which systems of oppression and their logics rely. Feeling "crazy/ insane" is the point of contact of an intrusion, viscerally felt, even as the contradictions may be evident on a cognitive level.

My pre-genocide scholarly focus has been largely concerned with the psychic effects of settler colonial logics, and yet this iteration of genocidal violence brought something new into the foreground: the province of the psyche was not being affected as a mere by-product, but as a primary target, creating a psychic grammar that enacts itself not just outwardly, but inwardly, as well. That is, the psychic impact was not just a symptomatic register of violence that could then be traced to roots planted elsewhere. Rather, the psyche itself was the pointed target. In this case, the psyche was/is the specific target of Zionist violence and imperialist expansionism "pushing up against [the] skull, waiting to be let in," as my patient piercingly described. While this example was about Zionism, we can extend the intent to target our psyches to all fascistic forces and systems of oppression. We must be interested in and precise about the logic of this psychic grammar that *intends* to intrude upon the interiority of so many people, causing confusion despite intimate knowledge about what is

happening in the material world. We need to be especially interested in the ways this intrusion can happen seamlessly, despite people's political consciousness. Calling this process *psychic intrusion* reminds us of the directed attack on our psychic province; psychic intrusions with intent to demobilize, demoralize, and defang the resources necessary to sustain the ability to remain connected to material reality especially in our revolutionary fights—in psychoanalytic terms, the reality principle.

Using the psychoanalytic psychiatrist and political philosopher Frantz Fanon's oeuvre, I have begun to think through what he terms the *psycho-affective*,[2] and how we must extend it to include the psycho-*politico*-affective to better understand how, through psychic intrusions, violent systems impress on our psyches, insisting not only on being felt, but on becoming normative fixtures within the topography of our internal worlds. The psycho-politico-affective can help us think about the consequences of resistance *and* repression—for example, how those engaged in political struggle in the streets or elsewhere are made to internalize fear, despair, hopelessness, and confusion, and how these affective states are not normative fixtures within the topography of our inner worlds. Nor are they exclusive to those who "break the law" or "challenge authority." The psycho-politico-affective grammar of psychic intrusions instead aims to solidify a psychic domain produced and maintained by violent systems that imprint themselves on our psyches. Put more simply, the province of our psyche is being targeted to accelerate political demobilization. This happens at the most fundamental level, through the activation of confusion, fear, and despair created through the ideological partnership between media, state power, and right-wing activist organizations, as well as through the violent complacency of liberalism, especially in confrontations against these contradictions. For this reason, we must attune to the imperious intrusions of the psycho-politico-affective to recognize, for example, that the expansionist project of Zionism or imperialism could not be complete without theft of the psychic terrain as well. Far from being accidental, this imperious theft is constitutive of the violence of oppression which is exacted through the channel of psychic intrusion. The conquering of our

interiority—not as a static process, but rather dialectically, through social processes where resistance and collusion are part of the same process of a "creation" of the interior world through conscription, co-optation and through "feeling crazy"—makes it certain that possibilities for domination, control, and coercion do not reside in the material world alone.

A FAMILIAR PSYCHIC STORY

Militants and revolutionaries have long documented intrusion into our psychic world in their analysis of the insidious reach of oppressive systems. For example, in *Blood in My Eye*, Black revolutionary George Jackson writes to John Gerassi from incarceration to discuss his political reading of what Jackson labeled the "oppressive contract." With his characteristic political vigor, Jackson writes about how "the system [i.e. capitalism] produces outlaws"[3] because "revolution will not be tolerated."[4] As the revolutionary "reconcile[s] himself with one day becom[ing] an outlaw,"[5] Jackson continues, "the commitment to total revolution must involve an analysis of both the economic motives and the *psycho-social* motives which perpetuate the oppressive contract."[6] Jackson offers a guiding framework as we consider the centrality of our psychic world in the way power moves, operates, and lands. Understanding economic deprivation alone overlooks the central ways in which oppression insinuates itself into our psychic and relational networks and it does not account for the ways in which ideology becomes naturalized in our minds and between us as humans in our social relations. Jackson is not the only political prisoner to alert us to the centrality of the psychic terrain in the abuse and violence of the state, its prison guards, and the overall conditions that created both their cruelty and the methods through which to exact their violence.

Writing about the Long Attica Revolt, Orisanmi Burton similarly reminds us how repressive violence against rebel insurgents within Attica, "adopted an approach that foreshadowed what would become a normalized aspect of carceral strategy after Attica: psychological warfare."[7] This psychological warfare—as discussed in the previous chapter—was pointed,

meant to demoralize *and* demobilize, and acted swiftly to diffuse the politically disciplined nature of the rebels' organized resistance against the entire carceral regime. Importantly, Burton demonstrates for us that the carceral machine's attack on the psyche was ideologically motivated, precisely because the state and its "prisoncrats" as he refers to them, knew that rebellions were "organized, calculated movements of massive resistance supported and assisted by outside groups and led by intelligent inmates using revolutionary tactics."[8] In Palestine, Walid Daqqa, Khalida Jarrar, and other political prisoners have highlighted similar patterns, pointing to the psychic realm as a key consideration in the colonizer's sinister arsenal, to be mobilized especially against revolutionaries.

As with my patients who narrate their intimate experience of psychic intrusions, those of us who are committed to militant political engagement must apprehend that the more we are engaged in politically dissident and revolutionary movements, the more likely we will be targeted with psychic intrusions that are *more* calculated, *more* forceful, and *more* intent on demobilizing action. We are exceptionally vulnerable to this intrusion, and it is therefore vital for us to remain vigilant in refusing their access to, or at least lasting impact on, our interiority along ideological lines. This is especially important because "ideological *commonsense* is handed down to us or stolen and distorted, used to deskill us."[9] Despecializing psychoanalysis to read the psychic grammar of psycho-politico-affective violence is one way we *reskill* ourselves—one way to move toward sustained psychic militancy in service of revolutionary futures as we will discuss in Chapter 4.

AGAINST MISIDENTIFYING PSYCHIC INTRUSIONS

Psychic intrusions find traction through psycho-politico-affective channels that themselves have been fortified in the messy business of being reared in and through the violence of capitalism, imperialism, and other oppressive systems that saturate our daily lives. Before I move to map out the grammar of these intrusions, I want to caution us against imagining psychic

intrusions in a simplistic binary that positions them as coming from only "out there." Part of their slippery violence, in fact, is that they are powerfully lubricated by the internal configurations of our own psychic and affective life. I also caution us against considering our psychic life as comprised of a "pure" space to which we can return, if only we were able to fully excise psychic intrusions. To the contrary, what makes the business of remaining attuned to psychic intrusions exceptionally difficult is that they are meant to intrude seamlessly, capitalizing on the identifications and contradictions that have been long fortified within us.

Our desires and their affective poignancy—and one might say counter-desires and the contradictions they create—come to *live inside of us* in ways that cannot be severed from the disciplinary codes of the prevailing sociocultural and political order. Gloria Wekker has described this fortification through the mobilization of Edward Said's concept of the cultural archive. She alerts us that, "the cultural archive is located in many things, in the way we think, do things, and look at the world, in what we find (sexually) attractive, in how our affective and rational economies are organized and intertwined. Most important, *it is between our ears and in our hearts and souls*."[10] That Wekker gives special attention to the psychic life of these codes "between our ears and in our hearts and souls" is a helpful reminder to us about the centrality of the psychic terrain for the full impact of violence to exact itself. In describing psychic intrusions, I am less interested in shoring up a misguided notion of a "virgin" and dislocated interiority to which we can make a safe return but rather mapping out how we might learn to more militantly notice, name, and manage such intrusions such that they have less of an ability to settle within us without resistance. While colloquially we might use "gaslighting" as a stand-in for psychic intrusions, I do not believe the concept of gaslighting has the breadth to explain the extent of the intrusion, or its intent to settle within us. Rather, we may think of gaslighting as one of many methods of psychic intrusion, rather than it being the intrusion itself.[11] We will spend more time on this in Chapter 4 but, for the time being, suffice it to say that the urgency to build

these skills, or to reskill, is upon us now more than ever, especially with the escalating tenacity of fascism, globally.

I am inviting us to follow Wekker and Saidiya Hartman's lead in complicating what might on the surface seem like a simple process of identifying psychic intrusions. Hartman helps us rethink the ongoingness of racial subjugation in the settler colony of the United States, reminding us that the afterlives of slavery were sustainable (even if in different forms) precisely because, "the whip was not to be abandoned; rather, it was to be internalized."[12] The internalization of the whip, a psycho-politico-affective process, poignantly alerts us to how racism and racial violence could move away from the exclusively brute force on which it previously relied, into the assuredness of a carceral discipline of race and its social relations that emerged from *within.* Acting from within meant that it could be harder to detect even as it guaranteed the continuity of the domination, exploitation, and coercion that also continued to happen from without. We might come to think of this as an articulation of how the carceral logic of racism, for example, comes to be lodged inside of us, used as lubricant for consequent psychic intrusions that animate race to exact their most effective violence.

Our intruded upon psychic terrain should also not be thought of as only belonging to "susceptible" people or those alienated from larger political struggles or their attendant violence. In fact, most people who have shared their version of psychic intrusion(s) with me are actively involved in political struggle; many of them have been involved in these various struggles for decades, and even more of them are extremely well versed in analytics of empire, capitalism, and settler colonialism. I mention this if only to highlight that, as with both my patients and the revolutionaries that preceded them, intrudable psyches often belong to people like you and me who not only know and study the violence we are witnessing but are also explicitly seeking to remain attuned to and disrupt that violence as part of our political commitments to the world. Despite this political priming and despite our ideological alignment against reality-bending, the intrusions can *happen anyway, and they can make us question ourselves and our sanity*. Intrusions work with this precise intention of infiltrating the psyche,

heeding what Sara Ahmed reminds us, that "power 'over you' can only take place 'through you'."[13] The insistence that power will act through us and our psyches should not be misread as a commentary on a foreclosed conclusion or a nihilistic acceptance of the strong-armed victories of power. Rather, this discernment can guide us to become even more interested—militantly so—in tracing and tracking the logic of what is unfolding psycho-politico-affectively. Our militant discernment should, at the very least, allow us to apprehend that because power needs "over you" and "through you" to exact its impact, we must nurture and sustain our capacity for barricading these channels.

The focus and potential utility of a despecialized psychoanalysis has emerged most forcefully with these realizations. That is, as I attempted to be of any semblance of use to patients and comrades alike, I recognized the need to remain organized in my own interiority. My attempts to do so were guided by a psychoanalytic framework as I wondered what was being psychodynamically stirred in the contradiction of being solidly grounded in one's reality and still insisting "I am going insane/crazy; it must be me." Rather than gatekeeping or hoarding this working knowledge as has been regularly done throughout the history of psychoanalysis, I wondered how we could continue in the tradition of revolutionaries, "professionally trained" or otherwise, to liberate the theory and the method in service of revolutionary futures. Brazilian psychoanalyst and political theorist Gabriel Tupinambá reminds us of the complications and importance of what I am calling despecialization in his own work with political militants, stating that, if for no other reason, we should be complicating these questions to "possibly creat[e] some space for political invention precisely because the analyst, like everyone, is also traversed by the contradictions and shortcomings of actual political struggles."[14]

This chapter explores understandings of (a) how psychic intrusions take hold; and (b) how we may come to recognize that a psychic intrusion is happening. I attempt to unpack how a despecialized psychoanalysis might help us read what I am calling the *psychic grammar* of psychic intrusions, a grammar that is organized and transported via the psycho-politico-affective.

I start with a despecializing foray into psychoanalytic concepts that have guided my understanding of how psychic intrusions might take hold (using information as to how these were formalized via PSYOPS, as discussed in the previous chapter) and then use examples to animate my thinking in a manner that may feel more easy to metabolize in reskilling ourselves. The next chapter will explore the affective alerts of intrusions.

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC CREATION OF A RIPE PSYCHIC DOMAIN

The practice of psychoanalysis is perhaps the consummate "science" of modernity. It sought to study, produce, and reproduce social-economic projects responsible for the creation of a universal, monadic individual with an individualized, self-contained psyche and dynamic set of desires (both conscious and unconscious) that distinguish one person from another. Even with this backdrop, in her comprehensive book *The Political Clinic: Psychoanalysis and Social Change in the Twentieth Century*, Carolyn Laubender insists that, "psychoanalytic practice constitutes an important site of political thinking, theorization, and action."[15] If we take this to be true—and I do, even if I differ in my insistence that it only becomes so when we forcibly seize it toward this end—the colonial project of psychoanalysis is also the reason to despecialize it, wrenching its sole ownership by the clinic and its landlords to pour it into the streets, so to speak, for our collective use.

Psychoanalytic practice has long been criticized for primarily being concerned with the individual psyche at the expense of the sociopolitical.[16] Ely Zaretsky notes that the exclusive focus on the individual was not accidental, but rather intimately imbricated in the making of an atomized modern subject—one that could "manage" their psychic interiority outside the clutches of the social networks that otherwise stubbornly imprinted on them. Through socialization into the psychoanalytic method, psychoanalysis was teaching people "to interpret their private worlds, [and therefore] modern men and women distanced themselves from

collectivities. Psychoanalysis taught individuals to withdraw from the painful tensions involved in their relation to society while encouraging them to relate 'more affirmatively to their depths.'"[17] This orientation remains the prevailing focus of psychoanalytic practice, boasting its affinity with the colonial project of atomization and an insistence on a universal individual psyche that is/was compatible with a monadic Eurocentric life. Rather than being an innocent venture, the affinity is foundational to the belief that self-sufficiency and individual accomplishment equate to a superior mode of functioning on which psychological and emotional "health" is predicated. The investment in individualistic functioning is further sharpened in contrast to the "enmeshed" interconnectedness that marks Indigenous, Black and Brown kinship networks that populate most of the world.[18]

Though admittedly often bereft of any analysis of race, class, empire, or colonialism, the theoretical underpinnings of psychoanalysis were not necessarily as misattuned to the interconnectedness of the psyche and the social world in which its created subject was situated—despite what some of its practitioners insist. Even Freud attempted to disabuse psychoanalysts of the belief that the psychoanalytic method could successfully sequester the individual at the expense of the social. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud opens with an important proclamation:

> It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper; as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well.[19]

Almost half a century later, existential psychoanalyst R.D. Laing (who is linked to the anti-psychiatry movement despite never using this label himself) presents us with a similar theoretical reading in his seminal *Self and Others*. Speaking to psychoanalysts, he posits, "we cannot give an undistorted account of a 'person' without giving an account of his relation with others. Even an account of one person cannot afford to forget that each person is always *acting* upon others and *acted upon* by others."[20] That is, to be ethical in our clinical understandings and interventions, we cannot divorce the individual, even if we only treat them individually in our clinics, from the psychodynamic intimacies of their relational milieu. Like Marxist psychoanalysts Erich Fromm and Félix Guattari, Laing also largely understood the symptomatic constellations of psychopathology as "normal" responses to the ills of the social world, further entrenching psychoanalytic thought (and practice) in its responsibility to treat psychic phenomena as intimately linked up with formations that extended beyond an individual's interiority. Similarly, Jacques Lacan radically transformed the field, theorizing about the social, language, and the imaginary, all of which were intricately bound up with social structures and their relations to psychological process and defenses. These theoretical insights would later lead to the theoretical school of relational psychoanalysis and the technical framework for psychoanalysts interested in a "social psychoanalysis."[21]

In recent years, the signifier "social" or "relational" has emerged as an important demarcation that separates psychoanalysts who recognize the inextricability of the intrapsychic and the social from psychoanalysts who prioritize the intrapsychic (internal psychic processes within the individual). This demarcation however, perhaps unsurprisingly, often does not translate into radical or revolutionary theoretical insights, technical interventions, or liberatory practice. Instead, the signifier can itself come to be used abstractly, often as the conceptual endpoint (rather than full throttle counter-force or committed disruption) challenging a hegemonic strand of psychoanalysis that continues to question the relevance of the sociopolitical —and even absurdly decries that "the social" has displaced clinical focus on the individual though no proof of this exists. The abstract use may also

unwittingly imply that the sociopolitical was never meant to be the theoretical purview of psychoanalysis. Here, I am pushing the double meaning of "theoretical" to intimate that the potentials of a psychoanalysis in service of revolutionary praxis were available in theory and, presumably, as in the form of possibilities, *theoretically*, even if it is also true that the attendant praxis was often never actualized, by design. Put differently, psychoanalysis has always theoretically been interested in the study of the psychic as it is situated within the socio-relational, and therefore, importantly for us, the *political* realm. Seizing psychoanalysis to deliver on this promise, to transmute the theory into an actionable weapon for our psyche—*in service of our revolutionary movements*—is my focus.

Nevertheless, just as we began with Fanon in the introductory chapter of this book, we can begin our militant practice against "commonsense" psychic intrusions by grounding ourselves in the material reality that, despite its imminent potential, an unseized psychoanalysis invested in modernity could only unfold as a disciplining mechanism meant to uphold a normative social order. The psychoanalytic method was pointedly engaged in politically demobilizing efforts such as "'repressive desublimation,' meaning instinctual release that sustained existing power rather than challenge it."[22] Beginning here is meant to be a descriptive rather than controversial statement, allowing us to focus on how the psy-professions more broadly, and psychoanalysis more specifically, have provided considerable psychic knowledge to those in power, if only by flagging how the psychic terrain is ripe for psychic intrusions.

This was the bread and butter of Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew, and the "father" of propagandist psychological warfare for regime overthrow in Latin America.[23] Rather than think about the psychic terrain as arid, PSYOPS architects like Bernays used psychoanalysis to highlight that the psyche was quite fecund, brimming with imprints, representations of the world and of others, and our own affective affinities. Intrusions could therefore be coaxed to land or take hold precisely because of the ideological saturation of the sociopolitical in our interiority, summoning Foucault's productive power—a power that works "not from the outside but from

within … not by constraining individuals and their actions but by producing them."[24] Psychoanalysis, despite its individualistic practice, has been used both to stabilize and aid power and to exact large-scale psychic harm, while, importantly for our revolutionary struggles, it has also contained clues as to its own subversion, or the ways in which we can turn it inside out, redirecting it against the power(s) that exploit our interiority.

At the simplest level, psychoanalysis is very clear that we have an unconscious along with consciousness; that is, we have a ripe psychic realm that can be animated when this psyche is bound up in the coercive domination and extraction of capital, empire, and colonial logics. Fanon's analytic precision guides us to understand how power always works on and through the realm of the unconscious while simultaneously obscuring the ways in which that unconscious is being shaped and how it is available for domination, especially during revolutionary times. As revolutionary struggles continue, Fanon reminds us, structures of domination work hard to dislodge our commitments, making us "losers from the start" through forced psycho-political concession.[25] This confounding maneuver is purposeful, animated through confusion or a coerced "forgetting" of the primacy of our psychic world in the arsenal of political power:

> Forgetting the unconscious makes us forget politics. This can happen when ideological or economic repetition accustoms us to what is repeated, petrifies and naturalizes it, makes it appear as something inevitable, as a necessary effect of the force of things or of human nature. Psychology and other sciences intervene here to offer us conceptions of humanity with which what is repeated is justified, rationalizing it, universalizing it and depoliticizing it. We then forget politics because we forget that repetition is historical and can be interrupted by those subject to it, by us, subjects.[26]

Working against this coerced petrification by interrupting the well-oiled psychic channels on which intrusions rely is of specific importance for our revolutionary struggles.

THE PSYCHIC GRAMMAR OF INTRUSIONS

I do not intend in this book to offer a comprehensive overview of psychoanalytic theory. Instead, in my attempt at despecializing psychoanalysis to arm us psychically, I turn to the mechanisms that make up what I am calling the psychic grammar of intrusions; that is, the internal circuitry on which psychic intrusions rely. We might think about psychic grammar as the mechanistic logics through which a particular intrusion must flow, as well as the psychic building blocks of a ripe terrain on which an intrusion can happen. Importantly, as with any grammar, the psychic grammar of intrusions is a patterned code that is intended to be obscured or difficult to track. The very fact that we are in the psychic terrain, and in the unconscious at that, means we can expect multidetermined complexity that only becomes clearer through purposeful repetitive disruption—in Avgi Saketopoulou and Ann Pellegrini's words, "anything that characterizes our sense of self precipitates through how we 'treat' the other's incursion into us; the self is thus what gets 'crafted' in the wake of, and in the effort to 'treat,' that invasiveness."[27] This is precisely why repetition, which we will address in Chapter 4, is a central feature of psychic militancy. But for now, if we think about the terrain of the unconscious-conscious—that is, an unconscious that is purposefully and consciously targeted and molded by ideological sociopolitical forces—we have to begin by defining the psychic mechanics through which intrusions exact themselves: identification (and relatedly, introjection), which I will describe below. These primary processes also activate what I will describe as *psychic inversions*, meant to disorient us and detract from material reality with the explicit intent of demobilizing our political commitments and actions.

The psychic grammar of intrusions depends on an unconscious that, as Freud articulated, is dynamic in nature. This unconscious, as Avgi Saketopoulou sharply illuminates, "never [stops] flaring up in … embodied relation. The unconscious was thus recast from something that could be extinguished (if we better understand ourselves) to an ever-present force that never dissipates …"[28] Rather than a depoliticized pop-psychology

understanding of the unconscious as a static entity (often represented via the submerged iceberg graphic) then, we can instead think about the unconscious as an ever pulsating and expanding constellation of desires, relations, images and conceptions of self and others (or self *to* others), as well as internalized rules and norms. A dynamic unconscious is constantly in movement, not beholden to the external structures that thrive on fixity, and also has the capaciousness to hold contradictions. Because we are in active negotiation of the dynamism of our unconscious, we sometimes become aware of clues that help illuminate the more active or raw pressure points that "leak out," despite our unconscious' best attempts at repression.[29]

Identification

The unconscious does not exist in isolation, even if it is internal and individually experienced based on the specificities of our worlds, familial and extra-familial networks and imprints. Nor is knowledge of its constantly rearticulated dimensions attributable only to self-reflection or dyadic exploration. To capture this texture of the unconscious with more agility, Christopher Bollas speaks of the "receptive unconscious"—an organ of *experience* that collates sensory stimuli, messages from family and the social world, and one's affective connection to "objects" in their environment, human or otherwise. This version of the unconscious does not just store messages about the self and others or solely rely on repression (pushing out of consciousness) and projection (externalizing a realization or trait onto another because it causes too much distress/ conflict) in a bid to circumvent internal conflict or misalignment, as is traditionally discussed. Rather, in Bollas' conceptualization, the receptive unconscious works through "aesthetics," what Saketopoulou later comes to describe as "aesthetic experience"—"an interaction with an object outside the self … and the interior process it sparks."[30] For Bollas, the experiences registered by the receptive unconscious can be both positive and negative, even if they are often muddled and uncategorizable. He posits that we have an impulse

to create links with external objects and "in the reception, we are looking for objects of desire in the environment, objects that we bring into the self, generating meshes, networks that make up our interests and investments."[31] That is, we can detect the workings of our receptive unconscious through our *identifications*.

Understanding the unconscious as receptively engaged and dynamic rather than a static receptacle of the world is central to mapping out how psychic intrusions might exact their impact through identification. More importantly, learning to think about the unconscious in this way shores up our ability to arm *against* psychic intrusions. For example, if the receptive unconscious is intimately engaged in gathering information from the environment, we can also apprehend the method by which carceral discipline is mobilized internally, how it is introjected—taken in whole—via the process of identification. Within the context of racial capitalism, colonialism and settler colonialism, cisheteronormativity, etc., we can come to understand how identifications mediated through the receptive unconscious are saturated by the violence of normativity, attempting to fix us into a subject position *from within as much as from without*. Psychoanalysis itself has been guilty of peddling this diminishing project. Speaking about the way racism is enacted via psychoanalytic theory and practice, for example, Saketopoulou rousingly reminds us to:

> Raise important questions about which version of the unconscious we think with when it comes to Black subjects or, to say it differently, which versions of the unconscious Black subjects are seen as deserving. Black people are frequently saddled with an impoverished version of the unconscious: not one that can be translated anew, giving rise to a range of possible desires, symbolizations, and interests, but a sedimented one that is filled, if not fixed, in the intergenerationally transmitted trauma of slavery, ongoing racial abuse, and police brutality.[32]

Saketopoulou is of course not detracting from the material reality of racism, or as Katherine McKittrick describes it, the *reality of race*, even if it is a construct.[33] Nor is Saketopoulou doubting the systematic instantiations or afterlives of slavery that can come to be internalized, like the whip, as Hartman described. Rather, she is alerting us to how the interiority and unconscious of subjects who are targeted by racism are imagined to be locked into a closed loop of psychic existence from which, importantly for this book, total liberation is never possible. This fixedness, a "primed" identification, so to speak, is what can come to be dominated, coerced, and exploited via psychic intrusions. This is the dwelling space of Foucault's productive power and internalized coercion, where, in Laing's words, "one *can be put* into a false position also, ultimately into an untenable position, by the actions of others."[34] Drawing from Fanon, Glen Coulthard similarly reminds us that for the colonized:

> in situations where colonial rule does not depend solely on the exercise of state violence, its reproduction instead rests on the ability to entice Indigenous peoples to *identify*, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profoundly *asymmetrical* and *nonreciprocal* forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the settler state and society.[35]

That is, the parameters of unconscious receptivity, and our own experience of ourselves and the possibilities of liberation we are able to achieve, are also subject to imperial and colonial control and subjugation.

Following Fanon and Coulthard, we can understand that the mechanism that greases the wheel for this internal carceral discipline is *identification*. Identification is the primary mechanism by which this control is psychically managed. For Freud:

> identification is the earliest and original form of emotional tie; it often happens that under the conditions in which symptoms are constructed, that is, where there is repression and where the mechanisms of the

> unconscious are dominant, object-choice is turned back into identification—the ego assumes the characteristics of the object.[36]

Put more simply, the way we connect with others, especially under circumstances where a psychic conflict has occurred, or has been made to occur in Laing's thinking, is through a turning of our psychic energies on or into ourselves. This turning inward is not neutral but rather tethered to the "object-choice"—a taking in of the constitutive elements of the object of our desires, our affect, and our attention. Object choices are not arbitrary but rather constructed within a psycho-politico-affective economy that ensures the stability of the prevailing social order. Because the process is unconscious, we are often unaware that a process of identification is happening, except when we become symptomatic. From here, it might be easier for us to understand how normativity is identified with, introjected, and therefore maintained. That is, if we live in a social order that strictly determines the parameters of our being socially, emotionally, politically, and even juridically, we can also track the methods by which an "object" (or systems made of objects) to identify *with*, to take in without detected internal conflict, is an intimate function of the construction of the modern self. Psychically, this identification also determines the *investment* (libidinal and otherwise) we have in protecting such an object and/or clinging to the method by which it can maintain its coherence within us. As Freud highlighted, "manifestations of identifications … result among other things in a person limiting his aggressiveness towards those with whom he has identified himself, and in his sparing them and giving them help."[37]

Identifications, then, are central in determining the disciplining function used on us and, in turn, that we exact on ourselves internally. In our exploration of psychic intrusions, we can understand how the mechanism of identification can act as a primary channel of violence, scrambling our ability to ward off its impact by "limiting [our] aggressiveness" and "sparing" the forces that intend on rearranging our internal topography in service of their stability and longevity. Through identification:

> Unconscious social structures, as with explicitly ideological messages that benefit those who enjoy power over us and commonsense explanations that mislead us about the nature of human action, effectively neutralize our efforts to subvert them … one way or another, they make us collude in reproducing what we intended to transform.[38]

Identifications determine the forcefulness which we use, or importantly we *do not use*, against the objects with which and with whom we identify.

For example, consider the ways we identify or introject the importance of "politesse," a civilizational discourse and process that is infinitely complicated by gender, race, class, etc. In this identification, despite our intuitive knowledge and reality-testing otherwise, we come to imagine— sometimes even convince ourselves— that we could be recognized, and therefore perhaps be protected and included in the realm of "human" if we are "softer", more "rational," more palatable, or more legible to those in power. Even if psychically seductive, as Mohammed El-Kurd has highlighted in his piercing book *Perfect Victims*, the identification disciplines us because "in practice, we remain ensnared by the psychological cues instilled in us by colonial logic."[39] This is an insidious project, he reminds us, because:

> curating the native as "respectable" is a misplaced priority because it redirects critical scrutiny away from the colonizer, which in turn neglects the innate injustice of the colonial project. This misplaced focus insinuates that the oppressed must earn what they are already entitled to: liberty, dignity, and basic rights.[40]

The identification ensures that psychic intrusions can find their way into our interiority, contouring the parameters of material reality and *inverting* them with an intent to confuse, deflect, and detract. Put more simply, psychic intrusions mobilize *psychic inversions* that are intended to psychically disorient us, making us feel "insane/ crazy" as with my patients who

consistently reported they *knew* they were connected to reality, but could not but experience their own psychic world as distorted.

Psychic Inversions

Psychic inversions are part of the machinery of the psychic grammar of intrusions, and part of the larger arsenal in psycho-politico-affective warfare; they are central to the stabilization and maintenance of racial capitalism, empire, and colonialism. Psychic inversions, therefore, are neither neutral nor innocent in form. The inversion of reality is a central feature of the grammar of psychic intrusions, a combination of disavowal and reality-bending—that is, a distortion of material reality through the imposition of supremacist logic that claims something is "natural" without attending to the political and social economy that created it, for example, settler colonial logic. Inversions therefore emerge as a primary mechanism for the maintenance of (narrative and material) hegemony, as well as the internal and external discipline on which this thrives. Importantly, psychic inversions shore up the ideological identifications that ultimately soften the landing for psychic intrusions which are primarily interested in course-correcting dissident action and behavior. That is:

> we are subject to the repetitive nature of … ideological words and phrases and narratives that keep telling the same stories about who we are and what it is impossible for us to achieve … we are symbolically and bodily subject to the repetition of contradictory failed solutions to socially-structured material problems.[41]

This disciplinary subjectification happens through an internalized (and affectively coerced) affinity with "the norms of one group— those with established power and a vested interest in resisting social change—declared to be the norms of society as a whole."[42] Or, as psychoanalyst Philip Cushman theorized, through the identification with a "cultural artifact"—that is, a sociopolitically generated version of the self and its interiority.[43]

Importantly, psychic inversions *make us feel crazy* because, even as we are otherwise connected with and attuned to the material processes unfolding before us, we are bound up in a psycho-politico-affective grammar that insists *we* must be wrong, exaggerating, unreasonable, etc. If we transport back to the episode from the 2017 conference room with the Zionist aggressor that opened this book, we can see the inversion mobilized through a relational process that subtly, if not overtly, encouraged *me* to be more generous, more understanding, less "aggressive" toward the intruder. The psychic intrusion then was less his aggression (an actual assault), but rather the psycho-politico-affective process that would derail us from militantly and definitively positioning him and his Zionist ideology as the violent force without seduction into the mental gymnastics of dialogue, magnanimity, and "empathy."

Fanon was clear that as our revolutionary struggles persisted, these types of intrusions would become more vicious, reminding us that "the idyllic, unreal clarity of the early days is replaced by a penumbra which dislocates the consciousness."[44] A dislocated consciousness is one that is foremost demobilized from revolutionary action because it is perpetually attuned away from the material reality of violence, instead perseverating on the primacy of apolitical "private worlds." This is the ripe terrain on which psychic intrusions and attendant inversions make their mark.

Textualizing Psychic Inversions

Allow me to provide an example of the psychic inversions many of us have resisted being conscripted into over the course of the Zionist settler state's genocidal campaign against Palestinians. Take for example the Student Intifada that sprang up across the settler colony of the United States and spread across the world—the one in which my patient at the beginning of this chapter was also engaged.[45] Almost as quickly as the encampments were created[46] the disciplinary machine churned out its construction of the specter of violence—the psychic inversion—with which we were meant to identify and then introject: the pro-Palestinian students were the violent

actors, not the genocidaires they were protesting, not the corrupt and unethical administrators that were inviting militarized law enforcement to beat their students, not the violently fascistic Zionist counter-mobs who were provided cover for their brutality. Encampments were deemed "unethical"[47] and "violent" by CNN anchors,[48] while the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was quick to pen an open letter to university presidents, demanding in bold font, that in response to the encampments, "**there must be clear and immediate consequences**".[49] While we might be tempted to scoff at the predictability of these inversions—because they are predictable—what I am interested in are the ways these dynamics impress upon a psychic grammar that is meant to be mobilized for, in this case, Zionist violence (and the nation states that shore it up) to have its most penetrating reach.

The psychic inversion was meant to have us identify the pro-Palestine students as the violent aggressors; as the ones that wanted to disrupt learning; as the ones intent on spoiling otherwise pristine campuses where Zionists felt able to hold genocidal intent and dehumanizing racism toward Palestinians *and* get to claim liberalism (and its education), too. In this identification, we are importantly also meant to disidentify from them, to create associations that make us qualify or doubt our positions in relation to their actions, political commitments, and their rights. The inversion is particularly perverse because, every day, we have examples of violent aggression perpetrated by Zionists, whether settlers attacking aid trucks in Gaza (accompanied by their children in strollers), or, in the case of the student encampments, the Zionist mobs that were permitted to physically assault pro-Palestine students, like at UCLA; or New York University erecting their own version of an apartheid wall to lock students in and out of campus. In the case of UCLA, one of the most violent Zionist aggressors, whose mother proudly exclaimed in a CNN clip that she is a Zionist and "proud of him" for being part of the assaulting mob,[50] has now relocated to the Zionist settler state and has become actively engaged in the genocide in Gaza.[51] We can now see how these psychic inversions were staging grounds for the current accelerationist violent agenda against migrants by US

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the impunity with which they, like their Zionist vigilante counterparts, terrorize communities, racially profiling, abducting and detaining migrants and other non-US citizens. The psychic inversion is meant to regularize the violence, based on the presumption that it is migrants who are violent or criminal. Like all psychic inversions, they are mobilized so that we disidentify with the struggle of migrant communities in this case, and become dislocated from the material reality that could create the conditions for the violence enacted against them. Psychic inversions would have us move away from the material reality that Alex Aviña piercingly highlights:

> The U.S. imperial boomerang has returned to one of its original launching points, the U.S.-Mexico border/frontier, our longest-running forever war. Except now that border is everywhere, extending from major U.S. cities, suburbs, and agricultural fields to university campuses and for-profit migrant concentration camps. Imperial war has come home, now fully actualized as a Palestine-Mexico border: a material, (bio)political, and ideological demarcation that separates those marked for life and those marked for disposability.[52]

While these psychic inversions are seductive, we should not move to dismiss them precisely because they were landing with such intensity that my clinical practice—and that of many colleagues— was flooded with material related to feeling disconnected from reality, no matter how intact the capacity to reality-test was. The psychic inversions were landing with such ferociousness that they demanded constant rebuttal. That is, the inversions did the counterinsurgent work of corralling and demobilizing psychic energy, whether through concessions made by pro-Palestine student protesters who repeatedly had to identify themselves as “non-violent” or several published analyses and reports that intended to *prove* the psychic inversion was not real.[53] Despecialized psychoanalytic knowledge can psychically arm us against these intrusions, allowing us to trace the psychic grammar through which they are mobilized: by way of identifications, these

inversions are not innocently deployed, but rather are meant to work precisely in this distracting and detracting way—slyly enticing us into fortifying their legitimacy by virtue of engaging them as though they had intrinsic merit. This happens based on affective associations that internally detonate a set of ideologically cohered beliefs. The inversion, therefore, is one way in which the psycho-politico-affective is animated such that we come to internally self-police and become outwardly disoriented and demobilized. The associative process is itself effective because it is constructed through and by power toward this end—an internalization of the whip, to recenter Hartman.

Stephen Sheehi has similarly studied, for example, how high-profile scholars are targeted by right-wing astroturf groups in attempts to make examples out of them.[54] They are targeted not only for the purpose of demobilizing the political work in which they are engaged, but importantly, *psychically* by associative process, to delink them from and demobilize anyone else who may be aligned with them. The carceral logics animated by these intrusions have the associative effect of pre-emptive psychological stoppage, the intent of which is simultaneously to forge an identification with normative order and halt people's counter-identifications, not only with individual people (i.e. one student) but with an entire *cause*. With every disidentification is also a compulsory *identification* such that the ask to disidentify never materializes in its singular form; rather, its pairing is carefully curated. As you engage in the psychic process of disidentification from the migrant or freedom fighter, for example, you are also regularizing psychically and affectively the tropes, norms, and modes of legibility that grease the wheels for the violence that birthed the fighter to begin with. In short, you are asked to *legitimize* a social order via the identification/disidentification process—the very channel that psychic intrusions use to exact their impact.

To be clearer, in going back to the encampments, the psycho-politico-affective associative process is not simply meant to make you *think* that the Student Intifada, or Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), or whatever else is concocted, are uniquely dangerous, but rather, to have you internally

affix to the preexisting infrastructure of violence that intends to create an action within us. This action, the inversion, is mobilized through a psychic identification; the codification of these movements as dangerous—codes that already saturate our world and that come to live inside of us through a receptive unconscious process. Keeping a neatly defined "enemy" within reach is one sure way to mobilize psychic intrusions with intent to demobilize us. In this way, the state only has to take one crude action—fascistically disciplining one university, one administrator, one organization—to set into motion an entire infrastructure in which people, and their psyches, discipline themselves and each other through the internalization of the reach and legitimacy of that power. Psychically, therefore, no identificatory process happens without a psycho-politico-affective investment. Investing in a totalizing position—an ideology that relies on your full submission to its coherence, whether that is Zionism, US jingoism, or capitalism—implies that you are divesting elsewhere. Because it is totalizing, we must disabuse ourselves of the possibility of engaging in an "investment-lite process," as this is an irreconcilable psychic position. Identification is meant to be totalizing to do the work of stabilizing power and oppressive structures. To be psychically militant means we repetitively disrupt the identification with a counterforce as ferocious as its intent.

In Chapter 4, I will further map out the psychic and affective utility of practicing this psychic militancy, including tracing, naming, and refusing the patterned psychic grammar and its logic. Marking this psychic grammar, just as we mark the logic of violence that propels it, begins to highlight something very important for us in our larger revolutionary movements. If we are to seize the normative knowledge of psychoanalysis, I am also inviting us to not treat the symptom as our main focus, but rather, to think of the symptom as a register. That is, we are often encouraged, through psychological "science" and pop-psychology alike, to see symptoms as the primary event; to believe that the symptom tells the story and that attending to its manifest content will help address the after-effects. This is where psychoanalysis and its despecialization can help us: the symptom is *never* the primary event. So, in our revolutionary struggles, if we are thinking

about state power and sovereignty, and the ways that settler colonialism or imperialism aim to extend their sovereignty at all costs (e.g. through increasing expansionism even into our interiority), we can come to recognize that the confusion or dissociation, the feeling of insanity/craziness that we feel is the register of the psychic grammar of intrusions. It is the alert of a psychic impact via intrusion and its resultant inversion—not merely a symptom, but the *intent*. That is, the intent is to psychically intrude not only to debilitate us, but to fundamentally rewire how the process of intrusion and inversion is happening so that we cannot recognize it. My patients' confusion, despite their intimate knowledge of reality, the "I feel insane/crazy" refrain that I have heard so often, is one way this intrusion solidifies its impact.

The impact can happen only if there is an infrastructure—covert or overt—that has been engineered earlier to spring into motion. This includes a re-engineering of certain aspects of civil society— think of the world reorientation post 9/11, for example, and the ways that the architecture of surveillance in airports and elsewhere is meant to become a normative part of the topography of travel vs. an aberration of social control, just like checkpoints in Palestine, or the presence of ICE in schools, supermarkets, and neighborhoods. Rather than these insights remaining abstractions, our interest and focus should be turned toward the ways these processes start to leak into our psychic interiority because that is the channel by which the sovereignty of oppressive systems is extended. Heeding Françoise Vergès' insights, because psychic inversions are meant to function undetected by conscripting us into the reality-bending they demand, "the challenge is to hold several threads at once, to override ideologically induced segmentation, and to 'grasp how production and social reproduction are historically articulated'."[55] Seizing psychoanalysis would allow us to "override ideologically induced segmentation" and remain grounded in the knowledge that if the unconscious is dynamic and in perpetual movement, the internal possibilities are also not fixed, no matter what power intends. More importantly, we can psychically arm ourselves to refuse seductions into psychic inversions that "limit our aggressiveness."

We might rightfully challenge the notion that, materially, systems can continue to function with impunity even if we learn to read logics of their violence and their intent to intrude on our psyche. I agree; my point is not to indicate that we can magically undo the violence of systems simply by shifting our psychic space. I am not advocating for a new-age prescription of manifesting ourselves out of material conditions. What I am trying to highlight, however, is that systems will not only function with impunity if we do not map out the psychic grammar of their violence, but that there is an insidious danger in their becoming internalized, and therefore ossified, in that formation if we are not practicing psychic militancy and the accompanying confrontational action it demands. That is, we *must* externalize their attempts at normalized settlement within our interiority if we are to have any chance in exacting our revolutionary futures.

3

Reskilling Ourselves: Identifying the Psycho-Politico-Affective at Work

The only instance in which Fanon uses the term “psycho-affective” is in *The Wretched of the Earth*. With characteristic prescience, he coins this term to describe an internal process within the colonized when what I am calling *psychic intrusions* occur. I am extending Fanon’s terminology and affixing “politico” to ground us in the always-already politicized nature of the psycho-affective plane. In this chapter, we will see that this psycho-affective plane, or perhaps we can say the “psyche” itself, is always a contested site; both always under a barrage of intrusions and, simultaneously, a terrain where politics and principles, refusals and affirmations, or psychic militancy (as we will see in the following chapter) can fortify us and our solidarity under sustained structural threats. From Fanon, as a militant, a psychoanalyst, and a comrade who designates the psycho-affective as our departure point, we learn to understand how the embodied effects of the psychological and political are regulated by colonial logics and their inherent racism, not as a by-product but rather the concerted intent of colonial domination. That is, colonialism and its lasting structures in the construction of the “modern” individualized psyche works through psycho-affective channels to regulate and exact violence (and sometimes contradictory pleasure) on subjects of domination. Fanon tells us that a “psycho-affective equilibrium” can be triggered and regulated within the colonized through the intrusive and far-reaching force of colonialism, reminding us that colonialism’s violence does not rest at making its landing only in the present.

> Perhaps it has not been sufficiently demonstrated that colonialism is not content merely to impose its law on the colonized country's present and future. Colonialism is not satisfied with snaring the people in its net or of draining the colonized brain of any form or substance. With a kind of perverted logic, it turns its attention to the past of the colonized people and distorts it, disfigures it, and destroys it.[1]

Intruding on the psyche is not an after-effect of colonialism. It has a pointed intent of rearranging the topography of our interiority, reaching into how subjects see themselves, not only in the present but also in the past, and how they imagine themselves in the future. Colonialism by nature is an expansionist project. As Fanon and others have shown us, the expansionist project of colonialism reaches beyond resources and land domination to include domination over the domain of the psyche. Psychic domination is not only a crude means to exact the material impact of distorting, disfiguring, and destroying with the precision and viciousness it intends but also a way to *naturalize* domination as necessary, warranted, and even desired by the colonized. Through the psycho-politico-affective plane, psychic intrusions permeate with force. They do so by using the capaciousness of the unconscious and its non-adherence to temporality (simultaneously reaching into present, future, and past) to create confusion and derail our ability to remain tethered to material reality, a skill we could otherwise use in service of psychic militancy. Fanon reminds us that the internalized image of the colonized can be derogatory or arrested in pre-colonized grandeur, each of which distracts and ensnares the colonized in a referential relationality with the supremacy and fixity of the colonizer. "Faced with the colonized intellectual's debunking of the colonialist theory of a precolonial barbarism, colonialism's response is mute … [reminding us] that the actual existence of an Aztec civilization has done little to change the diet of today's Mexican peasant."[2] Busying the colonized with a self-referential legibility, colonialism does the work of derailing present-day commitments. Fanon was clear that this discombobulating project was a curated process that capitalized on the power of the psycho-politico-

affective to engender identifications with power and, importantly, curtail counter-identifications with revolutionary commitments that have the power to dismantle the sources of suffering, psychically and materially. As we discussed in the previous chapter, these identifications are themselves colonial, as Diana Fuss underscores,[3] working to stabilize colonial logic and its dominant social order to ensure that the colonized remained fixed "in their place," in their ghetto or *madina*.

Fanon continues:

> When we consider the resources deployed to achieve the cultural alienation so typical of the colonial period, we realize that nothing was left to chance and that the final aim of colonization was to convince the indigenous population it would save them from darkness. The result was to hammer into the heads of the indigenous population that if the colonist were to leave they would regress into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality. At the level of the unconscious, therefore, colonialism was not seeking to be perceived by the indigenous population as a sweet, kind-hearted mother who protects her child from a hostile environment, but rather a mother who constantly prevents her basically perverse child from committing suicide or giving free rein to its malevolent instincts. The colonial mother is protecting the child from itself, from its ego, from its physiology, its biology, and its ontological misfortune.[4]

The psycho-politico-affective is exploited by colonizers, used to impress the supremacy of the colonial order seamlessly, "hammer[ing]" a conscriptive belief of *a priori* inferiority "into the heads" of the colonized. More than just haphazardly engendering a "so-called dependency complex," as Fanon critiques in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the intent of colonialism—and by extension all structures of oppression that follow a similar logic—is to mobilize psychic inversions such that the colonized have difficulty retaining access to material reality, the most life-sustaining strain of which is the knowledge that the *colonizer* is and always was the purveyor of violence.

He clarifies for us that this confusion happens *at the level of the unconscious*, making its impact in a psychic terrain that makes it harder to detect. Dwelling in the unconscious also makes it more likely that we will direct not only libidinal desires but also the investments we have in object choices, let alone our desire to protect and stabilize them, into the very structures that enact violence on us. This process makes it such that the colonized comes to desire the master's table and the master's life, experiencing themselves as lacking vs. retaining the ability to see how the colonial world is constructed to engender these desires; how "the colonial world is a compartmentalized world";[5] and how "it is the colonist who *fabricated* and *continues to fabricate* the colonized subject."[6] Fanon's reminder is chilling: the colonial "mother" is not to be thought of as nurturing, but rather, as a *savior* without whom we would retreat into our most essentialized wretched existences. This is the work of colonial object relations, as David Eng lays out for us.[7] Their introjects—the internal representations of self–other under colonial plunder—thrive in a matrix of domination and coercion *for our own good*.

The counterinsurgent work of the psycho-politico-affective is to normalize the disciplining function of these colonial introjects, conscripting us into carceral relation with and within ourselves and others. We discipline ourselves to cohere to a colonial logic that is structured around our debasement, distortion, and disfiguration. Fanon is clear that this violent intent is integral to alienation, ensuring that revolutionary fervor and commitments can be derailed, defanged, and demobilized. Here, we can appreciate the penetrative power of one of Fanon's most powerful observations. Colonial psychic intrusions cause confusion, on purpose; "because it is a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: 'Who am I in reality?'"[8] The questioning of one's self, the experience of *dissociation* that my patients and comrades have shared, that many of us have felt and have attempted to shake off, emerges as the consummate psychic intrusion, a deflective

internal process that works to dislodge and displace us from the material knowledge that has potential to inoculate us against intrusions.

We make this return to Fanon not only to highlight the centrality of the psycho-politico-affective in counter-revolutionary process but also to urgently ground ourselves in the necessity to remain vigilant about the manner and methods by which our psyches are targeted. Importantly, rather than surrender ourselves to a cynical fait accompli of the power of these violent systems, we can reskill ourselves into a daily commitment of disruption in service of liberation. One of many tools toward this goal is a despecialized psychoanalytic knowledge that helps combat the certainty that psychic intrusions will settle within us.

RESKILLING OURSELVES

In a 2019 recorded interview from incarceration prior to his martyrdom, Palestinian political prisoner Walid Daqqa provides us with a piercing account of the psycho-politico-affective violence mobilized by the Zionist settler state, what Ghina Abi-Ghannam translates as a "searing of consciousness."[9]

> The most intense psychological operations that Israelis have is the searing of consciousness. It is the most vicious of all the interventions that human psychological experiments can cause. And what is more difficult is that you cannot name, you cannot explain what the source of your suffering is … the body of the incarcerated no longer becomes the primary target of torture, but instead, it is his mind and his soul.[10]

Daqqa, like Fanon, reminds us that the psyche is the target of colonial and settler colonial violence, intruded upon with intent to be manipulated, distorted, and *seared*. Daqqa's understanding of the searing of consciousness alerts us to how psychic intrusions are meant to take hold, pressurizing and pushing upon our interiority such that it will be permanently altered. Altering our psyche is "the most vicious of all the

interventions" because it ensures alienation, malleability and docility. Psychic assaults, both subtle and crassly blunt, makes it such that we are caught up in endless detractions and deflections, searching for a method to accurately capture the carceral and disciplining process to which we are being subjected.

Tellingly for us, after recognizing the searing intent of the psycho-politico-affective, Daqqa commits to combating its sinister impact by engaging in what he calls a psychological "scientific study"—a militant tracing of and attunement to the mechanics of what I am calling psychic intrusions. Through this militancy, and heeding Fanon's guidance, he vows to disrupt the colonizer's ability to claim victory over his mind. Abi-Ghannam movingly summarizes Daqqa's position:

> Walid guarantees to us that we cannot change what we cannot name, and [reminds us] that naming requires a discipline that resists the distractions of symptoms—that sits with those symptoms to deconstruct them but is not led astray by them, that scientifically identifies the operations that are behind those symptoms and then consciously defies them.[11]

In other words, Daqqa is determined to remain militantly clear on how psycho-politico-affective power is working *on* and *through* him, to return to Sara Ahmed. His starting point is recognition and naming, reminding us that the way to do this successfully is to engage in a daily practice of disrupting psychic intrusions in service of psychic militancy.

As Daqqa teaches us, learning to recognize that psychic intrusions are happening is a *skill*. More, learning to identify psychic intrusions is a *willful* practice. Sara Ahmed reminds us that willfulness itself "could be thought of as political art, a practical craft that is acquired through involvement in political struggle, whether that struggle is a struggle to exist or to transform an existence."[12] Recognizing and then refusing the intent of psychic intrusions to dominate, conscript, undermine, and/or reconfigure our internal worlds is both to "struggle to exist" and "transform an existence"

by recognizing that this skill, as Fanon and Daqqa make clear, is one we are purposefully disciplined out of. Attuning to this disciplining process is the consummate Fanonian practice of disalienation—to become aware of the ways that oppressive systems saturate our daily lives and commit to disrupting their ability to function in and through us with the antagonism needed to dismantle them materially and psychically. This combative practice of disalienation is not a color-by-numbers process, but rather an intellectual, affective, analytic, cognitive, and, most importantly, *political* commitment and method. It is a *practice* of becoming disalienated, consciously aware of the ways in which psychic energy and processes are always under contention and are meant to become fields of manipulation—by design. The practice transmutes this field of manipulation into a field of struggle.

The composition and variation of psychic intrusions are specific not only to our individual interiorities, but to our locale, geographies, and the differing capitalist, colonial, and settler colonial configurations of our respective environments. That said, despite their individually experienced impact and instantiations, my experience through conversations with comrades, in work alongside my patients, and with my own observations, has been that these psychic intrusions (and their attendant inversions) make their landing via patterned psycho-politico-affective channels. My hope is that— rather than locking us into an exclusivity of experience—by sharing repetitive and persistent psycho-politico-affective strains we may become increasingly aware of other clues, other possibilities, and other affective textures that may be impossible for me to fully capture here. Importantly, in despecializing psychoanalysis, we should be less concerned with *content* (that is, the actual material, lexical, or otherwise) of the affective clues below, and more with the *process* of how they are mobilized, as the most meaningful psychoanalytic inquiry does. For Daqqa, the *content* of what his Israeli torturers did (e.g. strip him of privacy) was less important than the fact that the *process* of denying him privacy was psychically grinding, meant to communicate that every part of his world was open to domination. The process relied on him being ensnared by the content, perhaps even

enticing him to believe that if *he* behaved differently, the conditions could also be different. Walid's attentiveness to the searing of his consciousness allowed him to recognize that the process would endure, regardless of content and his own behavior, because the condition was incarceration, a parallel process to the condition of settler colonialism, a "microcosm" of Palestine more broadly, as he noted. Following Daqqa's lead, we can become attuned to symptom as register, as we discussed in the previous chapter. Even if the affect does not feel especially compatible with the internal experiences you have had with psychic intrusions, the process can become a portable analytic or logic that helps sharpen our adeptness at reading the creases of vulnerability that make up the porous entry points for psychic intrusions.

In mapping out how psychic intrusions take hold, I want to be clear that I am not repackaging an archaic psychoanalytic deficit model of our psyche —one that psychoanalytic practice continues to hold on to in many ways— to imply that we are locked into that lack of capacity were it not for the divining help of a psychoanalyst. Rather, I am insisting that the psycho-politico-affective is curated in a manner such that each intrusion intends to make us feel and, more importantly, *believe* that we cannot ward off the incessant nature of intrusions—Fanon's basis of alienation, encapsulated in his specter of the "protective" colonial mother who altruistically saves the colonized child from themselves. Learning to attune to the purposeful degradation of the capacity we *do* have to remain connected to material reality becomes indistinguishable from recognizing the calculated intent and impact of psycho-politico-affective violence.

We begin then with the surety that psychic intrusions happen and that they exploit internal identifications. Below I map out the patterned psycho-politico-affective alerts that I have traced over the years and to which we should become attuned to ensure our revolutionary futures: namely, exhaustion, fear, confusion, and despair. These umbrella affective states are not meant to be totalizing or comprehensive but rather can be calibrated to a logic that attends to individual specificities, needs, and vulnerabilities. In the context of psychic intrusions, I am urging us to consider these affects

less as “not real” or mere stand-ins, but rather as symptomatic registers that can alert us to the presence of psychic intrusions intent on demobilizing revolutionary aims and commitments. As we discussed in Chapter 1, these affect states have been carefully studied by psychological warfare specialists for their counterinsurgent aim. From the knowledge that our psyche *is the intended target*, we can arm ourselves with a materially grounding starting point: we must become increasingly aware of what is working *on* and *through* us; and, we must be alert to what system, process, or “oppressive contract,” to return to George Jackson’s insights, is seeking to be stabilized and shored up via these psycho-politico-affective channels.

Tracing this process is important precisely because refusing psychic intrusions takes a considerable amount of energy. It is a clue to us that we are engaged on another plane, even if we do not yet consciously know its full contours. At the simplest level, we can come to trust that psychic intrusions rely on disavowals that must be as persistent as their intent to perpetuate the alienation that allows their undetected continuity. These disavowals underscore the psychic inversions necessary to sustain the dominance of normative oppressive structures, with specific attention to the logics of settler colonialism. Think for example about the ways many of us who live in settler colonial conditions are constantly seduced into a disavowal, a splitting off and forgetting of the reality that we live on stolen land *even when our political commitments are such that this knowledge is central to the type of world we want to dismantle*. Nick Estes, extending Fred Moten and Stefano Harney’s work, reminds us that this inversion is necessitated by the disavowal central to settler colonial mythmaking. He skillfully breaks down this logic, highlighting why psychic intrusions and their inversions are important to track:

> invasion looks like self-defense, and the settlers, hiding in their militarized forts, are the “real” victims of an encircling native aggression. Such a reversal of roles, in which aggressor becomes victim, is a make-believe national narrative that began when settlers first invaded Indigenous lands in North America and repeats itself every

time the United States invades or bombs another country in its overseas imperial project.[13]

The psychic inversion is not only pervasive, but also *invasive*, matching the theft and plunder of its material instantiation and expansion. This is the stuff of psychic inversions and accounts for the tremendous psychic weight we must navigate.

If we understand ourselves to be imbricated in setter colonial logics that seek to solidify themselves as normative structures even internally, it is not a stretch to name that each step of this process includes a psychic demand intent on wearing us down into submission, into "forgetting," or, at the very least, into confusion. The pointed wear and tear—the searing process that Daqqa spoke of— is meant to be psychically grinding and, therefore, altering. Naming this associative process is important because it acknowledges Ahmed's "over us" and "through us". It externalizes and insists *something is being done to us* and, more pointedly, reminds us that an action (and force) is happening *in* us. The ability to track this as a targeted rather than merely an arbitrary after-effect of power and its consolidated systems is the ability to name how these affect states come to be an alienating and disarming force. This ability, indeed, one that must be cultivated and practiced, is one psychological technique to become attuned to the psychic grammar of intrusions. As Fanon guides us, learning to return to how structures of oppression exact their psycho-politico-affective impact is a means to reskill and inoculate ourselves against further intrusion.

Exhaustion

A clinical supervisee, a Black woman and politically engaged organizer and clinician, and I had been meeting weekly for approximately one year when she began to speak to me about the profound exhaustion she felt, especially in sessions with her Black patients. In our ongoing exploration of this impact on her clinical work, we began connecting the exhaustion in part to the considerable psychic and emotional demands she—and her patients—

experienced as Black folk in the United States. She shared her hesitation to mention the exhaustion, even to me, as her political commitments were such that she felt she should not “wallow” in what she felt was distracting affect. We spent time talking about the various “self-help” approaches she had tried over the course of the year. She had prioritized herself, her sleep, her rest, took naps, etc., none of which made a dent in the exhaustion she felt. Instead, these “progressive” self-help practices left her feeling isolated, “indulgent” and atomized in relation to her community.

We spoke about how these self-help interventions often felt empty and fell short in “delivering” meaningful analysis about what she was viscerally experiencing, despite intending to name some realities related to “living while Black.” Moreover, “disconnecting” to take a “break” was often assumed to constitutively hold healing power. Yet, while promising psychological “nourishment” and “recharge,” she found that this form of “self-care” might reinforce hyper-individualism and avoided consideration of the very structural and material reasons why she initially felt compelled to disconnect. We realized we were describing a foreclosed loop, one that felt like a coercive trap. For example, she spoke to how demoralizing it felt to “do all the things” prescribed to her in the books she read and the webinars she attended, sometimes by people who shared her Black identity and other times by non-Black folks whom she admired politically. She told me that she not only still felt the exhaustion but also had to contend with the ways these offerings often made her feel as if her exhaustion was experienced as singular, located within her as an individual as a unique failure of her own. We spent many weeks returning to the parallels she saw with her patients, with specific focus on feeling “stuck” in the loop of exhaustion—an affective foreclosure we both felt contained considerable clues for us in understanding what *else* could be happening.

Together we intentionally practiced what Daqqa draws our attention to, a “discipline that resists the distractions of symptoms— that sits with those symptoms to deconstruct them but is not led astray by them.” We sought to understand how exhaustion itself was a symptomatic register. We came to realize how dangerous accepting the psychic displacement of even

progressive, race-minded, self-help manuals was, without politically attuning to the psycho-politico-affective intent of implanted exhaustion. Tracing from the exhaustion outwards (and inwards), into the structural logic of its intent, my supervisee articulated a seemingly simple but deeply profound psychic intrusion:

> I realized that everything I have been worried about doing, or really *mis*-doing, both in therapy and in my life more generally is a fantasy of what a white woman does or thinks. It is a fantasy that isn't mine but that still lives inside me, sometimes even guides me, even when it has nothing to do with who I am or how I would ever act. What the fuck.

While both of our political commitments understood that the exhaustion she and her patients felt was bound up in the material realities of violence against Black folks in a white supremacist world, her piercing recognition helped capture a textured "implant," as we named it—an intrusion that made it difficult to retain access to a political and structural analysis of the persistent exhaustion. Exhaustion, while absolutely linked to the wear and tear of racism, was a higher-level alert about a political project that was playing out viscerally, in Fanonian terms, on and through her. Through our practice, we were reminded that "the symptom is an obstacle but also, dialectically understood, it is an opportunity."[14]

Important to the project of this book, the opportunity that emerged through our process and practice was understanding how a depoliticized explanation of exhaustion also had the impact of disappearing McKittrick's "fact of " Blackness[15] as well as the complex and variegated histories Blackness contained in and against a white supremacist world. Without the politics linked up in Blackness, she felt locked in her exhaustion, which transmuted into an essentialized birthright—a fixed notion of her existence as Black woman that foreclosed liberation. What interested us both was the process by which she was conscripted into this psychic terrain. That is, despite my supervisee's studied political analysis of how her Blackness was being interpolated by the world, this knowledge felt especially difficult to

"hold on to," let alone use combatively, whether in the clinic or in the streets. Exhaustion was a saboteur and became the mechanism through which she was intended to remain alienated, an individual, locked in her station, in Fanon's "compartmentalized world," thinking *she* was to blame. For my supervisee and countless others, just as Mohammed El-Kurd reminds us, "colonial logic gaslights us to believe that it is our shortcomings, not colonialism itself, that stand between us and liberation."[16]

While exhaustion can be a sign of many things, then, not the least of which is the quotidian emotional wear and tear of the violence of the world more broadly, I am interested in how this affective texture can alert us to the presence of psychic intrusions. Namely, if we trace the psychic grammar of intrusions as being involved in detracting from material reality, in the creation of confusion despite knowledge, and the purposeful intent of scrambling our ability to remain clear on the structural condition(s) before us, we can begin to attune to how exhaustion can alert us to something *else* that is happening. This something "else" is not innocent, but rather ideologically driven and pointed, and, importantly, enticing and conscripting if not acknowledged and disrupted. As Sasha Warren movingly reminds us in *Storming Bedlam: Madness, Utopia and Revolt*:

> what revolution and insurrection illuminates for those who live through them is the impossibility of nonparticipation, an insight that may press on the mind with more force under the duress of war, but which pertains just as well to peacetime. There are political determinations, but then there are events that define the social web within which any determinations at all occur. These transform the field on which any position at all is taken; to decline is already to stake a claim on the battlefield by naturalizing the existent.[17]

Exhaustion is never neutral. Nor is exhaustion exclusively an individualized effect of a corporatized world, or even solely the embodied result of abstracted concepts of historical trauma as a result of colonialism and racism, as self-help books, even those mindful of race, gender and sexuality

often exclusively focus on. This abstraction of race and gender depoliticizes ongoing structures of racial capitalism, not as historical trauma merely passed between generations, but as a means to *produce* power, sustain domination, and reproduce commodity consumption and production (if not also the social relations of cisheteronormative patriarchy, racial hierarchy, and capitalism that regularize them). Therefore, we cannot afford to depoliticize the ways in which exhaustion is activated on and through us. Psychologically, exhaustion should be seen less as a by-product and more as a desired effect of breaking subjects down to sustain social reproduction. As my supervisee and I came to understand together, our psyche is always replete with the promises of conscription and self-discipline (alienation) *and* liberation (disalienation).

Working with the idea of symptom as register, my hope is that we can read exhaustion as one type of psycho-politico-affective alert; an alert that can breadcrumb us along a path that maps the psychic resources we are coerced to expend. This is one way we can remain connected to reality—or, as Fanon termed it, become disalienated.

Fear

The small group of organizers sat in a circle speaking softly to each other as they waited for the last attendees to arrive. At the front of the room was a whiteboard where someone had written an Audre Lorde quote in capital letters:

> We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired. For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us.[18]

The meeting was part of a workshop series intended to address the psychological wear and tear that organizers had been experiencing as they

engaged in cross-coalitional organizing in a rural part of the state in which they all lived. That night's meeting had a primary goal of opening up space to explore, discuss, and unpack "what is happening psychologically" when we feel afraid—in this instance, specifically related to organizing against ICE raids and against police brutality toward the local unhoused population. The prominently displayed Lorde quote was an organizing feature as folks discussed the various textures of fear they experienced, as well as what had been shared with them by other comrades, family members, or friends. What struck me was that, overwhelmingly, people were describing fears less connected to the brute violence of the state— violence such as surveillance, brutalization, or incarceration—but rather, "low-grade" anticipatory fears that nonetheless had the impact of dampening their psychic energy and revolutionary fervor.

This meeting and our collective exploration were meant to unpack the "what else?" that was occurring in these moments. That is, we had expected to trace the mechanics of the psychic grammar of intrusions they had all experienced. What emerged was a layered conversation about the counterinsurgent work of identifications related to sociability, politesse, aggression and gender, race, and class expectations. For example, though many of them had extensive experience in engaging in confrontational tactics with law enforcement, such as de-arrests, the fears that were impacting them most acutely were those related to disrupting relational processes in everyday conversations and interactions at their place of work, in their learning environment, or with family. These seasoned activists and organizers felt this omnipresent fear and anxiety even while acknowledging fully that they were continually and pointedly being subjected to propagandistic talking points and mainstreamed discourses intended to criminalize and demonize them. They were keenly aware of a visceral response that sometimes derailed their ability to intervene or act in alignment with their political commitments organizationally and in the streets.

Using details specific to their own personal histories, we discussed and unpacked examples that highlighted how each of them had learned, or

introjected—often very early on in their lives—the psychic lesson that we are not meant to name a process that is unfolding in-vivo. This hesitation to name an unfolding process was not due to confusion, disorientation, or feeling tongue-tied, but rather because they felt *fearful* that they would be received as aggressive, labeled as "over-reacting," or be experienced as a killjoy. We discussed how the most damaging part of these mundane fears was how they came to override the ethical imperative of political disruption in ways that nefariously detracted from the material oppression that was happening—an oppression to which they were attuned and often felt personally impacted by. Like other psychic intrusions then, fear played a pivotal role in distracting and derailing *action*, affectively tying up otherwise engaged organizers through normative and carceral relational modes that were usually alien to them. More, experiencing this derailing fear made them feel ashamed and caused them to question their political positions or how well they understood their politics. Through speaking about anger which can follow a similar logic, Françoise Vergès walks us through the logic of this intentional derailment, reminding us that the "pacification of our militant past contributes to our domination in the present, and power exploits this pacifying narrative to teach contemporary movements a lesson. Norms of respectability are enacted to stifle anger, to make anger dishonorable and fraudulent."[19]

Fear is psycho-politico-affectively weaponized and mobilized in service of carceral discipline. The goal is to create fear, distrust, self-doubt, and insecurity as a general state among a population targeted for pacification, and especially in militants fighting against such pacification. As discussed in Chapter 1, the architects of PSYOPS were clear on this intent. As an orienting reminder for us, Peter Watson nonchalantly stated that, unlike other psychologists, psy-warriors "concentrate on what is often the lingering business of suffering. Fear, hate, deceit, pain, humiliation, loneliness, homesickness, envy, jealousy."[20] The psy-warrior, therefore, specializes in psychic intrusions, using psychological know-how to intrude on the psychic province with intent to produce maximal impact. Tellingly, they do so through what are thought to be the more base and dangerous

emotions, fear being a prime example. Watson refers to these emotions as "currency," an honest appraisal of the intended commodification of the psycho-affective plane, one that is meant to have searing reverberations, as Daqqa taught us. Fear is particularly and intentionally demobilizing, and, tellingly, animated via a temporal psychic plane so that, as pan-Africanist psychologist and social theorist Amos N. Wilson highlights, "our life is not determined by relating to history appropriately—but determined by fear."[21] In tracking the transformation of how psy-warriors even handled fear, Watson notes that psychologists purposefully decommissioned the label for "fear", supplanting it instead with the neutral sounding *stress*, meant to allow psy-warriors to tinker with the force of the impact they intended for it to make. The change was itself part of a larger project, noting, "stress is a psychological jargon word: most importantly, it is 'value-free'—neither good nor bad but something which, like any coldly clinical entity, can be manipulated, experimented with …"[22] If we understand that the sleight of hand of a "coldly clinical entity" has a diabolical ideological intention, it is less likely to pass undetected and therefore becomes easier to predict. We can become disciplined in our practice of reading process and pattern, in this case, when fear is activated.

Fear is produced and mobilized not just so that it can be felt in a singular moment or even experienced as a discrete stand-alone emotion. Rather, fear is a condition that produces possibilities and forecloses others. It designates channels through which psychic intrusions are introduced into the shared psychic plane of a population, intrusions that, in turn, siphon off energies, demobilize subjects and distort how they view themselves (and their agency) in the present, in the fantasied future, and in a reworked historical horizon. This happens in a patterned way—that is, in the way it can psychoanalytically come to *count*. For our purposes of tracing psychic intrusions, we can think about the temporal psychic plane through which fear is mobilized as being meant to solidify, for future and repetitive use, the psycho-politico-affective framework that is optimally activated and reorganized.

Manipulating a psychic temporal plane also means that the intrusion can dictate the parameters of our attention and the urgency we feel. While at times the urgency of fear immediately derails our action, at other times we are purposefully enticed into believing that what we fear is off in the distant future, despite the affective process that is fueled by urgency. Like the transmutation of the word "fear" into "stress", which is "softer" and gives the impression of manageability, conscripting us into only fearing what is to come has the sinister ideological effect of distracting us from what is *already* here. While it might seem more overwhelming to focus on what is actually *already here*, insisting that the feeling of fear generated is precisely because the intrusion is happening *now* is one way we can remain attuned to material reality. That is, rather than engaging in the fantastical hypothetical through which fear is induced—which itself is also not innocent but always includes a promise of amelioration that stabilizes structures vs. dismantles them—we can instead remain present and acknowledge that fear is being exploited to stabilize a very specific social order with the intention of politically defanging us.

Confusion

Confusion is not only an individualistic inability to cohere and process one's thoughts under the "swarming" overwhelm of power, as Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian describes.[23] Rather, Fanon poignantly tells us that confusion is central in creating and maintaining the naturalness of ideology's hegemony, the naturalness of living in the "compartmentalized" and "divided" world between colonized and colonizer.

> In capitalist societies, education, whether secular or religious, the teaching of moral reflexes … those aesthetic forms of respect for the status quo, instill in the exploited a mood of submission and inhibition which considerably eases the task of law and order. In capitalist countries a multitude of sermonizers, *counselors, and "confusion-mongers"* intervene between the exploited and the authorities … [agents

> of the state] bring violence into the homes and *minds* of the colonized subject.[24]

Tellingly, as with all psychic intrusions, confusion is curated, implanted, and stoked by the colonizer with specific intent to shore up a hierarchical social order that only works to stabilize power. While the infrastructure of carcerality is imbricated in education and the transmission of normative being more broadly, the go-betweens, the conduits into the *minds* of the colonized are what Fanon terms "confusion-mongers." Infrastructure alone will not suffice; rather, the psycho-politico-affective must be marshaled, mobilizing identifications such that carceral violence exacts its most pernicious reach into the psyche.

Fanon's focus on confusion also helps us apprehend the grueling task of clarity—and its urgency—especially when key actors in the "psy-disciplines" are conscripted to do the stealth work of intrusions. It also helps us refocus on why seizing psychoanalysis for revolution emerges as a pressing step toward disrupting the psychic power these intrusions hold. Unseized psychoanalysts, sermonizers, and counselors are confusion-mongers because they corral both the social and professional legitimacy with which they are imbued and their technical know-how, even if "innocently." They form the professional army responsible for guiding the landing of psychic intrusions, in this case, in the form of a confusion that is intended to instill doubt about material reality, working to "slow people down" by prioritizing reason over more "primitive" affect. Reason, for Fanon, is a "moral reflex" used in ideological service of "fostering of love for harmony and wisdom"[25]—a counterforce to revolutionary fire that sets off every psychic siren to scramble our connection to material reality and the force that is needed to dismantle the violent systems that reality entails. An over-reliance on pragmatism and the tendency toward centrist realpolitik strategies is one example of how confusion-mongering through an over-reliance on reason emerges in our revolutionary struggles—a consistent sticking point that student organizers across the USA, Europe and the Arab world have shared with me over the previous years.

In a meeting with one of the student groups at a large and prestigious state school in the United States, for example, students pored over the Chancellor's 70-page mealy-mouthed "explanation" of why the use of law enforcement was necessary to "clear" a pro-Palestine student encampment on their campus. The students were not confused about the mobilization of humanist liberal discourses that sold their brutalization as paternalistic protection (reminiscent of Fanon's colonizing mother); rather, they were interested in maintaining clarity in relation to the confusion they described experiencing about *why* they felt themselves drawn, or conscripted into, political compromises. These compromises often ran counter to their hardline political commitments and, more importantly, to the knowledge they held about the purposefully emotionally coercive process that was unfolding. Many explicitly voiced struggles with confusion related to whether they were being "unreasonable," "too harsh," or "hurting the cause" by being unbending. They shared how even some faculty advisers or mentors were coaching them to "tone it down" so that their message "wouldn't be lost."[26]

If we understand the psychic grammar of intrusions, we can come to anticipate the ubiquitous presence of a pragmatist/realpolitik argument against freedom-dreaming, to borrow from Robin D.G. Kelley. And the people making this argument will always be those who "intervene between the exploited and the authorities," whether they are psychoanalysts, faculty advisers, administrators, or tepid liberals. Every carceral system, whether under colonial, settler colonial, or corporatist guise, needs its confusion-mongers. Every carceral system relies on our interiority to be aptly primed for this intrusion. The psychic intrusion of confusion is especially important to attune to because, like fear, it also mobilizes a psychic temporal plane to make its landing. When thinking about pragmatist arguments, for example, we can see how often they devolve into accusations of fantastical presumptions of the future. This breakdown is not only due to the inherent affective fallacy on which they rely but also because they are meant to serve as purposeful detractions from how the *present* demands our practical engagement. That is, the pragmatist approach is meant to confuse us and

disguise the knowledge we have that freedom-dreaming does not disentangle itself from practical engagement—forcing an impossible and binary choice that will always eschew militancy—and, important to us, that psycho-politico-affective processes are at work.

While the realpolitik argument is then always over-invested in the "delusion" through which freedom-dreaming may be engaged, it has already led us to psychically surrender emergent possibilities. This is how psychic carceral discipline works, matching the external chokeholds that Jasbir Puar contours with the foreclosures of dynamic movement in our interiority. As Fanon warned, being conscripted into the belief that there is a "reasonable" choice under searing conditions like those Daqqa found himself in is what confuses us, alienates us, and leads us away from the struggle. Confusion is a psychic intrusion that is always-already saturated by a coercive psychic compromise.

Despair

The headlines read:

"A glimpse of Gaza's miserable future" (*Newsweek*, August 2025)
"Gaza and the End of History" (*Boston Review*, July 2025)
"Gaza's erased future" (*Le Monde*, May 2025)
"Our Beloved Gaza is Gone" (*The New York Times*, January 2025)
"Even with a Ceasefire, Gaza has no Future" (*Newsweek*, January 2025).

Each headline, though different in the cynicism with which it is written, despairingly eliminates every Palestinian who commits to life despite the genocidal violence wrought by the Zionist entity. Through the animation of despair, the headlines and the content of this puerile "journalism" disappear every Palestinian who continues to refuse to be erased *in the present* and, even more imperiously, every Palestinian who dares dwell in the future, especially in the Gaza Strip.

In the August 2025 *Newsweek* article, our affect is coercively squeezed, pulled to despair on behalf of "Gazans" who have not seen any shift in the

state of famine they are experiencing despite the article's lead-in about the United Nations, Arab and "Western" states "airdropping" food, and even a quote from the USA's buffoon-in-chief. The coercion is not because the material reality is not true—Palestinians in Gaza *are* being starved, and the so-called powers of the world are more interested in lip-service than any meaningful action such as sanctions or arms embargos, let alone a legitimization of armed resistance against a genocidal settler state that resorts to collective punishment such as famine because of its military failures. The coercion instead comes in the narration of a besieged Gaza in a voice that psycho-politico-affectively intends that we believe *this is the only possible outcome* while simultaneously not once naming who and what is besieging and forcibly starving Gaza, or why. If we are to despair over Gaza and the Palestinians who have been forced to live within the Zionist-enforced barbed wire, we are to despair in an equally curated way, cleaving the foreclosed future of Gaza from the conditions that have been carefully constructed by its settler colonial overlords for decades (not just in 2023, 2024, or 2025). The handwringing is a deflection of responsibility and reality, conscripting us into a despair that orients us away from the aggressor and into an amorphous and inevitably bleak future from which we cannot break out.

In the committedly genocidaire-promoting publication of *The New York Times*, we see yet another form of despair-mongering. While this version may be easier to detect by those of us committed to full Palestinian liberation, we must remain attuned to how *content* is the distraction for *process*. Grounding ourselves in Daqqa's realizations about how consciousness is seared allows us to trace the logic of these types of despair-inducing interventions; processes that demand our attention if only to collate data to better defend our psyches against intrusion. Tellingly, this piece is written around the same time as a ceasefire announcement. The sinister project of naturalizing despair in service of settler colonial logics is under way immediately when, in the first sentence, we are introduced to a "Gazan" who is "pretty much the opposite of Hamas." The "Gazan" who "before the war … admired Western democracy, condemned suicide

bombings and yearned for Arabs and Jews to live in peace and harmony" is ventriloquizing his despair to us. Beyond the extractive and exploitative sleight of hand, despair emerges as the psycho-affective hook through which we are meant to identify with the protagonist who is "opposite of Hamas." His defeat is our signal—our legitimizing invitation—to introject the despairing native informant[27] as a fixture of our *own* interiority. Like Fanon's colonizing mother, this conscriptive identification is *for our own good*, as the author laments about his "fear that the message about the futility of endless war hasn't gotten through." Joining the Westernized, civilized "Gazan" in his despair would mean that we could prove that we had finally understood this message.

If we are not attuned to the animation of the psycho-politicoaffective plane, we may find ourselves waylaid by the tedious violence of bothsidesism in the face of a genocidal war machine that had been rampaging with impunity for more than a year at the time of this article. More sinister in the searing process, however, is the construction of the representative despairing native as our primary identification. The despairing native Palestinian informant becomes the foil through which our own investments in the surety of the full and total liberation of Gaza, and all of Palestine, can be cannabilized. That is, he purposefully serves as a counter-identification and redirection of our psychic energies away from the unrelenting stamina, resolve, and force of the resistance fighters who are *not* despairing and who do not see their "beloved Gaza" as succumbing to the foreclosed machinations of empire and its settler colonial proxy. Far from being innocent, as with all psychic intrusions, this version of despair works in tandem ideologically with settler colonial state policy, illustrated within days of this article, for example, by settler organizations erecting a "No Future in Palestine" billboard in Arabic in the West Bank.[28]

I detail what may seem like a mundane mobilization of despair so that we can commit to noticing the process by which this psychic intrusion becomes woven into the psycho-politico-affective tapestry of oppression. And to remind us that the animation of all psychic intrusions like despair works through the psycho-politic-affective realm, not arbitrarily but rather

as a necessity for the ever-expansive reach of the imperial, colonial, and settler colonial imaginary—and their pointed intent. In this tightly knotted affective foreclosure, we are meant to join not only in the rewiring of material reality (in the case of despair, pre-emptively sacrificing, and therefore murdering, the millions of Palestinians who *remain* in Gaza), but also our own interiority. The intended effect of this searing process is that the only shorthand affect available to us is the *fait accompli* ensured through despair.

In our psychic militancy, we must heed revolutionary Palestinian martyr Bassel Al-Araj's caution: "do not contribute to instilling a sense of defeat."[29] We must remain vigilant that the purpose of psychic intrusions is not only to have us feel the affect; that is, to feel despairing. I am also not pointing to despair as a condition of alienation and modernity so obsessed upon by British and European writers of the twentieth century. More concretely, through these examples we can see how despair is meant to ensure that we write Palestinians out of their and our future, out of Gaza, and out of Palestine. Despair as intended effect seeks to have us accept the futility of the notion that we would be able to engage in a reality-telling exercise that Mary Turfah poignantly models for us when she states: "Palestinians are not struggling to survive Gaza. They are struggling to survive Israel, a state whose existence is predicated on Palestinians' annihilation-propelled 'displacement.'"[30] It is for this reason that I consider the implantation of despair as a psychic intrusion—precisely because we are actively derailed from our ability to do what Turfah does with the fervor and consistency that is needed. Despair is a desired effect and affect meant to create *psychological* blockage, to derail us from remaining tethered to and clearly able to identify material reality, and to regularize the impossibility of dismantling oppressive systems that stand in the way of our liberation.

CONCLUSION

I am not advocating that we feel shame when we realize we are ensnared in the web of despair, confusion, fear, or exhaustion. To the contrary, the crush of the numerous horrors we have witnessed over the past several years, from Gaza, to the Congo, to Sudan, to ICE abductions and brutality in the settler colony of the USA, to disappeared Indigenous women in the settler colony of Canada, to police brutality against Kanak people, and countless other examples worldwide, are intended to weigh heavy. Rather, I am highlighting these psycho-politico-affective textures and patterns to explicitly underscore how there is nothing incidental about this weight. The affects we repetitively feel and experience are among many ways in which our psyche is commodified by power (especially when resistance and political commitment is high). As the architects of PSYOPS lay out, the explicit intention of mobilizing all arresting affect is to demobilize our revolutionary fervor. Psycho-politicoaffectively they work to conscript us into writing and believing in yet-to-be-realized losses and to parrot a foreclosed narration of a future-qua-history that has yet to be enacted. In short, they perpetually dissuade us from committing to our revolutionary futures.

The repetitive way I am outlining that the territory of the mind and our interiority is prime real estate—to use a capitalist term—for power, matches the repetitious ferocity of psychic intrusions. Rather than this being a paranoid statement about power being able to control our minds, it is instead a grounding recognition that understands the mechanisms and grammar of psychic intrusions with accuracy and precision. More, it reminds us that in stopping up our ability to think, in ensuring that we remain alienated, systems also stop up internal resources primed for action. For our purposes of daily commitments, when systems of oppression psychically intrude and attack the link between thinking and action they also intend to prime people to cave at any moment of tension in that process. From here, we become disciplined to stop in our tracks at any sign of psychic adversity mobilized through the psycho-politico-affective; a carceral psychic process which matches external carceral discipline.

One might ask why it is not easier to detect this pattern, despite our political knowledge and attunement. In response, we might think about the "overwhelm"[31] that affect can cause and, in this case, is purposefully activated to extinguish our revolutionary fire and, as Fanon and Vergès remind us, to reconfigure our own history. That is, because psychic intrusions are by nature persistent (even if they attempt subtlety) and aim to dislodge us from our connection to the material condition(s) in front of us, we can understand how, even when predictable, the intrusion works such that this realization is hard to grasp in real time. Because we become affectively flooded, intrusions work to lock us into foreclosures that shore up the inevitability of the oppressive structure and incapacitate our ability not only to imagine but to also act on the necessity to dismantle the force that is causing the intrusion.

None of these experiences could be mobilized affectively or psychically without our identifications and the attendant process of coercing people into disidentification. As Freud brought to our attention so early on, the enticement of identifications works on "limiting our aggressiveness." This is precisely the work of the psycho-politico-affective, enticing us via identifications that can cohere around our identities, our interiorities, ensuring that we are more likely to "spare" rather than destabilize or dismantle the intruding force. Coming to acknowledge this reskills us toward refusing psychic intrusions, or, to practice *psychic militancy* as we will discuss in the next chapter.

Remaining attentive to this process (rather than just the content) and intervening internally *and* externally to disrupt it, is easier said than done, of course. It is why I am proposing both the despecialization of psychoanalysis and the repetitive exercise of seizing its knowledge as a practice and a daily commitment. While we can roll our eyes at the audacious puerility of counterinsurgency manuals and the approaches that psy-warriors use, they are a good shorthand for us to map out the channels by which our psychic world is being intruded upon. We can understand the entry points and the seams upon which we must get skilled at pushing. We can also work against the mobilization of shame in response to exhaustion,

confusion, fear, or despair setting in. There is nothing to be ashamed of when the psychic intrusions happen. To the contrary, as I noted above, if you are laboring for a different world in earnest, the intrusions *will* come. When we fall into the shame, or have shame evoked as the overwhelming symptom—again, a demobilizing affect—it is yet another clue. These affects are meant to stop us from consistently apprehending how psycho-politico-affective *content* can and will be used to find traction to create a *process.*

The more we are practiced at finding the soft entry points, especially the ones that are sensitive for each of us (e.g. based on race, gender, social and familial position, and national and cultural histories), the more we can disrupt the intrusive project and its intent to reconfigure the topography of our interior. Put more simply, we must act strategically and become versed in the affective and psychic dimensions of our struggle, otherwise it becomes a major weakness that can not but be exploited. As we come to understand the invitation from oppressive systems is either a full submission to affect (despair, for example) or a demand that we vacate our affect (exhaustion, for example) precisely because it is political, we can begin to connect to affect as a generative register. Our attunement disrupts the psycho-politico-affective from being mobilized only to discipline.

4
Psychic Militancy

In a 1957 essay in *El Moudjahid*, the newspaper for the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN) the National Liberation Front of Algeria, militant revolutionary psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon unbendingly commits us to what I am calling *psychic militancy* by insisting that *liberation is the precondition*. Liberation must be the non-negotiable starting point of all our political commitments, all our political strategies, and every political action that we undertake individually and collectively. In this essay, he responds to critics of the FLN who instead insist on "reason" and negotiations as "strategic" starting points for the next stage of revolutionary struggle. To this supposedly pragmatic necessity for negotiation, he responds, "abandoning the *preconditions* and the goals of our struggle are one and the same thing."[1] Any move—no matter how minuscule—away from the unwavering commitment to total liberation as the *departure point* for political commitment is to surrender our revolutionary goals and futures. He continues, "The FLN will not betray the trust of the Algerian people in order to conform with some good wills unconnected with the horrendous real that is the martyrdom of our homeland … nothing solid or constructive can be elaborated on lies and duplicity."[2] Fanon articulates a crucial guiding principle vital to the maintenance of psychic militancy; namely, psychically abandoning the precondition of liberation is an assurance that it will be abandoned materially. More concretely stated, capitulation and compromise —that is, normalization—are the psychic precursors that inevitably translate into impossibilities of material liberation.

Psychic intrusions, as we discussed in the previous chapters, are the prevailing psychic method by which we are conscripted into identifications

that grease the wheels for the psychic surrender Fanon warned about. Working with the psychoanalytic knowledge we have seized in the previous chapters, this chapter will detail the urgency of reskilling ourselves with psychic militancy to better ward off incursions into our psyche and to ensure we do not stray from commitments to our revolutionary futures. As Fanon rousingly lays out for us, practicing psychic militancy "amounts to deciding, in one and the same act, to break the vicious circle and inaugurate the reign of freedom …"[3] Not surprisingly, Fanon's militant articulation brings us into direct conversation and coalitional solidarity with militant commitments of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. Returning to the revolutionary logic of a similar precondition, Nick Estes reminds us:

> Indigenous resistance is not a one-time event. It continually asks: What proliferates in the absence of empire? Thus, it defines freedom not as the absence of settler colonialism, but as the amplified presence of Indigenous life and just relations with human and nonhuman relatives, and with the earth. To invoke the Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson, the refusal to accept the impossible condition of banishment and disappearance from one's homelands, and outright dispossession, structures the Indigenous political practice of return, restoration, and reclamation of belonging and place.[4]

Psychic militancy is a commitment and practice of "amplified presence" through revolutionary political consciousness that at once "decid[es] to … inaugurate the reign of freedom" and embodies "the refusal to accept the impossible condition of banishment and disappearance."

In this way, psychic militancy is active, and it is willful, in Sara Ahmed's words—with "willfulness thus becom[ing] an assignment in another sense: a project or task that we can take up in our everyday negotiations with the world."[5] Psychic militancy is a daily political practice. It is not a practice of liberal mindfulness but of radical consciousness. Psychic militancy aligns us with the precondition of liberation, a precondition based on an irrefutable knowledge of material reality. This

psychological clarity ensures that we remain vigilant about the intent of power to mobilize all oppressive structures against us to quash militant clarity. Psychic militancy affirms that the psycho-politico-affective plane is a conduit of power that plays "over us" and "through us," as Ahmed reminds us, to animate and exploit via overt (heavy-handed) and covert (mundane) psychological operations meant to conscript us. Psychic militancy recognizes that the repetitious ferocity of psychic intrusions necessitates an equally, if not more intense, routine of psychic refusals to curtail their impact. Psychic militancy affirms that systems of oppression like settler colonialism, imperialism, and racial capitalism, among others, instill a predatory psychic grammar within us with explicit intent to reorganize the topography of our interiority. Psychic militancy ensures that we are cognizant of symptomatic affective registers that help us detect the work of psychic intrusions. Psychic militancy helps us track why it is in our practice of Fanonian disalienation—in the practice of wrenching ourselves from the identificatory alienation that disciplines us—that we will experience the most violent crush of oppression. Psychic militancy works to ground us in what Foluke Taylor refers to as the future conditional, asking us "what would have had to happen for us to have been able to breathe and live [in revolutionary futures] now?"[6] Most importantly, psychic militancy insists that our revolutionary futures are possible, attainable, and enacted through political militancy, psychically and materially, *now*.

Liberation as the precondition may seem to be an obvious and non-negotiable starting point for those who are politically committed (both theoretically and in our praxis) to the necessity of revolution. And yet, as we covered in the previous chapters, the coercive and seductive (not mutually exclusive) ideological processes through which oppressive structures exert influence intentionally make the task of remaining psychically militant more difficult. We are meant to be wrenched from the precondition. We are enticed into compromises, negotiations, and concessions that stabilize the future of structures of oppression, structures from which we seek liberation. The surrender of the precondition of liberation, then, exchanges the surety of our revolutionary futures with a

diluted promise that oppressors can be transformed into partners, neighbors, friends, and “allies.”

Being dislodged from the precondition is an ideological trap, whose predatory success relies on our waning clarity, as Fanon reminds us:

> The people and every militant should be conscious of the historical law which stipulates that certain concessions are in fact shackles. If there is no attempt at clarifying this it is surprising how easy it is for the leaders of certain political parties to engage in nameless compromise with the former colonizer. The colonized must be made to see that *colonialism never gives away anything for nothing*.[7]

Compromising with the colonizer, with power, in any way, is to lose a political wager and the process itself becomes the channel through which we are dislodged from the precondition. Compromises, whether they are through bids of legibility, normalization, or a softening of our positions, as has been consistently asked of pro-Palestine demonstrators, students, and faculty, for example, are predicated on our compliance, discipline, and conformity in lockstep with colonial logics of domination. It is in the interstices of this ideological trap, these shackles, where our most militant attunement to the imperious intrusions of the psycho-politico-affective must emerge. As Fanon underscored:

> the militant must be supplied with further, more searching explanations so that the enemy’s concessions do not pull the wool over his eyes. These concessions, which are nothing but concessions, do not address the essence of the problem, and from the colonized’s perspective, it is clear that a concession does not truly address the problem until it strikes the heart of the colonial regime.[8]

That is, nothing short of meeting the precondition should satisfy us, and no compromises, psychically or otherwise, should be made until this goal is achieved. This is the essence of psychic militancy. It is how we remain in

alignment with our revolutionary goals, despite psychic intrusions; it is how we remain willfully conscious of the expansionist project of power, aware that the reach into our interiority is in service of a domination that cannot be complete without theft of the psychic terrain as well.

Through psychic militancy, we can practice a form of political consciousness that alerts us to how our psychic world is activated along well-worn affective planes and circuits by actuating associative processes that coercively insist we disidentify from our struggle, our revolutionary heroes, our radical principles, and our liberatory causes. As we discussed in previous chapters, and as Diana Fuss highlights, through the mobilization of identifications with power, "the colonizer projects what we might call identification's "alienation effect" onto the colonized, who is enjoined to identify and to disidentify simultaneously with the same object, to assimilate but not to incorporate, to approximate but not to displace."[9] Through the psycho-politico-affective plane, these processes might, for example, signal to us who we are to fear and why; to see a forcibly starved, resistance fighter in flip-flops as a menace while seeing well-fed, state-of-the-industry armored, high-tech Zionist genocidal soldiers as valiant heroes. Psychic intrusions work to normalize settler colonial reality-bending, luring us into accepting the oppressor's "victory" as inevitable. This psychic manipulation creates a commodified despair that stabilizes colonial power by foreclosing true liberation—allowing us only to "approximate but not displace" the colonizer and their violence. Refusing psychic intrusions through psychic militancy means we must begin by locating ourselves at an uncompromising baseline of total liberation, the precondition, at all times. This unbending starting point is not Pollyanna-ish, but should act to keep us aligned in disrupting attempts to decenter our struggle—politically and psychically—from that baseline. Psychically starting at the precondition generates politico-affective energies of material possibilities beyond that which recalibrates power; a fierce counterforce that heeds Fanon's warning: "nothing solid or constructive can be elaborated on lies and duplicity."

In alignment with Fanon's provocation to remain militantly clear about the precondition, the remainder of this chapter will unpack the mechanics of

psychic militancy, with specific focus on despecializing and depathologizing psychoanalysis' notion of the repetition compulsion, seizing it in service of our own militant psychic routine of repetition. To concretize this further, the chapter will ground us in several vignettes, examples of psychic militancy, to unpack illustrative instances of resistance against the methods by which the psycho-politico-affective plane is mobilized to derail revolutionary fervor. These examples are meant to illuminate and despecialize the workings of psychic refusals against psychic intrusions. Some of these examples are infamous and may be immediately recognizable to many of us, such as Ghassan Kanafani's brilliant 1970 interview with Richard Carleton in Beirut. Others are just as powerful but might seem mundane, easy for us to overlook under the crushing pressures of the world. I have chosen a mix of these examples because they model the force and daily commitment needed to reskill ourselves against psychic intrusions. More specifically, they highlight the unrelenting repetition and the intensity of focus and uncompromising alignment with the precondition, irrespective of psycho-affective demands connected to respectability politics, aesthetics, or any other coercive social relation. They also highlight the externalizing force needed to antagonize psychic intrusions and their intent to settle within us, acting as models of the type of *willful practice* of psychic militancy in which we needed to be engaged.

ON REPETITION

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* Freud introduces his theoretical insights related to the "compulsion to repeat"[10]—a hallmark psychoanalytic tenet that attempts to address why people have the tendency to find themselves repeating experiences (relationally, psychically, and otherwise) if indeed those experiences caused what Freud noted was *unpleasure*. Because unpleasure is a feeling people tend to avoid, for Freud, the compulsion to repeat was representative of the need to unconsciously experience vs. consciously remember these events or instances which had been repressed. Troubling, disruptive or traumatic experiences were therefore

unconsciously reworked because consciously remembering would cause too much psychic distress. Because the unconscious is dynamic, expansive, and not bound by time, Freud determined that the repetition was also a helpful compromise. Though it caused distress in some ways, it could also satisfy another part of psychic life.

> It is clear that the greater part of what is re-experienced under the compulsion to repeat must cause the ego unpleasure, since it brings to light activities of repressed instinctual impulse. That, however, is unpleasure of a kind we have already considered and does not contradict the pleasure principle: unpleasure for one system and simultaneously satisfaction for another.[11]

For a long time (and even to this day in some circles), psychoanalytic theory and practice spoke of (and treated) repetition as a pathological return to sites of unresolved psychic issues, wounding, and trauma. Psychoanalyst and theorist Avgi Saketopoulou, however, offers a refreshing reading in her groundbreaking reconfiguration of trauma vis-à-vis repetition. The invitation from Saketopoulou is to embrace what she coins a *traumatophilic* orientation, pushing past the stale psychoanalytic conceptualizations of trauma sites as merely closed feedback loops of suffering that fix subjects and subjectivities into place. Instead, she challenges us to attune to the generative power of wounds—something that can become possible only through oblique psychic possibilities that refuse normative coercion and rewire the potential of repetitious experience. Repetition here is not *only* pathological, but can be harnessed for the powerful transmutative force it can contain. This theoretical and psychic pivot can help us retool and, importantly for this book, *seize* the psychoanalytic concept of repetition compulsion toward our revolutionary futures.

Reminding us of the concept's theoretical import, Saketopoulou states, "Freud later formulated repetition compulsion as a relentless, unstoppable return to the site of trauma that is driven … by a demonic force." She then boldly highlights, "from this angle, repetition compulsion's hope is to

master trauma, and it is always doomed to fail. Repetition, that is, botches the project it sets out to accomplish—to master the traumatic past."[12] If the failure of the repetition compulsion is constitutive of its theoretical construct as Saketopoulou informs us—that is, if it cannot achieve what it theoretically intends, locking us in an endless loop of repetition that creates the conditions for its own necessity—I am advocating that we wrench it from the hands of its captors. I am advocating for a seizing of the repetition compulsion, turning it on its head to attune to how it is in fact *power* that repeats; it is *violence* that repeats; it is *oppression* that repeats; and through their repetition, they entice us to repeat in the predetermined loop they construct through psychic intrusions via the psycho-politico-affective plane. This loop is meant to ensure their own longevity and derail ours, as Fanon and other revolutionaries have taught us.

Revolutionary political prisoner Dhoruba bin-Wahad's experience of the force of this violent repetition is movingly and painfully documented by Orisanmi Burton, reminding us how the repetitious violence of PSYOPS and their psychic intrusions are meant to cause permanent wear and tear—meant to sear consciousness, as Walid Daqqa highlighted: "to do this they engaged in constant psychological battles, constant psychological torture, and constant attempts to isolate me [bin-Wahad] from the community and from other prisoners."[13] As bin-Wahad testifies, power *must* repeat to insinuate itself into our interiority, into the very fabric of our psyche and how we relate with others and our surroundings. Seizing and retooling the "compulsion to repeat" reminds us that, in the face of power's repetition, *we* must learn to repeat as well, not in a foreclosed loop of stuckness but rather as a generative practice of psychic militancy that, at every turn, challenges and antagonizes power's ability to settle within us. We must repeat for ourselves to remain grounded in material reality and obstruct the nefarious intent of psychic intrusions to derail our revolutionary commitments. We must harness the repetition, to play off of Saketopoulou and capture Freud's own dictum, so that the pleasure principle on which the compulsion to repeat hinges can be "replaced by the *reality principle*."[14] In seizing this psychoanalytic mainstay, in remaining tethered to a non-colonial version of

the reality principle, we can bring into being a different type of reality—not one that is battering-rammed into existence by violent structures, but one that *we*, in our revolutionary commitments and actions have willfully pressurized into being, through repetitious force, like Daqqa and so many other revolutionaries before us.

For Sara Ahmed, this is a practice of generative world-making on the most mundane level, a daily practice to refuse the prescriptive and inhibitive inertia intended by power. "Willfulness is ordinary stuff. It can be a daily grind. This is also how an experience of willfulness is world creating: willful subjects can recognize each other, can find each other, and create spaces of relief, spaces that might be breathing spaces, spaces in which we can be inventive."[15] We can willfully invert the intent of the repetition compulsion, engaging in a routine practice of psychic militancy with the unbending goal to usher in the revolutionary futures we struggle for.

As we despecialize psychoanalysis, we can affirm this generative intent by cribbing what even Freud knew: "anyone who wishes to produce an effect upon [a group] needs no logical adjustment in his arguments; he must paint in the most forcible colours, he must exaggerate, and *he must repeat the same thing again and again*."[16] Learning to read, identify, and detect the psycho-politico-affective with the precision inherent in psychic militancy can only be internalized through repetition. In this decisive moment of liberal enticements and global capital's restabilization, it becomes essential to maintain psychic militancy and (re)ground ourselves in this skill as a starting point. A persistent commitment to the precondition shores up our disciplined psychic militancy, practicing how to stave off the confusion and never-ending terror that is both the intention and consequence of Zionist aggression, expansionism, and imperial violence, for example. Psychically, affectively, materially, and politically, the murderous repetition compulsion of state and settler state violence compels us to return repeatedly to the position of psychic militancy, an affirmation to our own commitments to Fanon's precondition. As our comrades struggling to wrench psychological

services from the hands of the state in Greece teach us, “this is not just an ideological struggle; it is a practice of everyday life.”[17]

Psychic militancy as a willful repetitive commitment, as a “practice of everyday life,” politically and conceptually learns and borrows from Glen Coulthard’s insistence on an Indigenous practice of disciplined “resentment” against the crushing force of the colonial politics of recognition, repair, and seductions into carceral legibility. In a double re-working of *ressentiment* and Melanie Klein’s psychoanalytic concept of “resentment” as representative of a psychic arrest in a “paranoid-schizoid” position,[18] Coulthard helps us realize the dangers of the psychoanalytic concept of “splitting.” Splitting is an engagement in what is colloquially referred to as “polarizing” and “black and white thinking,” psychoanalytically thought of as a pathological psychic barrier to “repair.” Learning from Coulthard, we can insist that under colonialism, splitting forfeits its pathology. He offers a powerful reframing that reorients us psychically into the reality principle, or material reality:

> what implicitly get[s] interpreted by the state as Indigenous peoples’ *ressentiment*—understood as an incapacitating inability or unwillingness to get over the past—is actually an entirely appropriate manifestation of our *resentment*: a politicized expression of Indigenous anger and outrage directed at a structural and symbolic violence that still structures our lives, our relations with others, and our relationships with the land … resentment can be understood as a particularly virulent expression of *politicized anger*.[19]

Psychic militancy is an outcome of this politicized anger, a grounding force in the material conditions that necessitate the anger; a refusal to succumb to demands to not “split” under the guise of civility, or under the false promise of a more equitable future that does not foremost, as in Fanon’s words, “strike the heart of the colonial regime.” A refusal psychically, and materially, of anything that does not meet the precondition. It is a forcible refusal that allows us to remain politically conscious of all seductions away

from our revolutionary futures, first psychically, and then consequently through refusals of all other material barriers.

Refusals therefore are willful practices of psychic militancy. The refusal act is itself stamina-building, strengthening our ability not only to attune to how our lives are circumscribed by the structural and symbolic violence inherent to settler colonial logics, as Coulthard highlights, but also to the possibility that, at the very least, we can disrupt this process from unfolding within us—and outside us—without forceful resistance. Or as Audra Simpson names it, we can commit to a "political life that, in its insistence … fundamentally interrupts and casts into question the story that settler states tell about themselves."[20] Psychic militancy and the refusals it animates are about casting into question every story that violent systems of power intend to implant in our interiority, even if the new story that will emerge is not yet clear to us. That is, even if we cannot anticipate what the outcome will be, engaging in psychic militancy ensures we remain committed to the precondition and to dwell in the space of the future conditional that Foluke Taylor invites us into. In Katherine McKittrick's piercing articulation, "the work of liberation does not seek a stable or knowable answer to a better future; rather, it recognizes the ongoing labor of aesthetically refusing unfreedom," followed by the moving footnote, "we are not an impossibility."[21] Repetitiously committing to the practice of psychic militancy ensures that we, and our revolutionary futures, do not remain a coerced impossibility.

BE AN EXTREMIST:
ON UNBENDINGLY HOLDING THE LINE

On November 23, 1964, during a layover on his way back from Africa to the USA, Malcolm X spoke to and took questions from an audience at the Salle de la Mutualité in Paris. Among many other interventions and questions, an audience member presented a challenge to Malcolm:

> Mr. Malcolm, you want to form a movement which is extremist, and you have said that there must be a movement of Afro-Americans towards Africa—a philosophical, psychological and cultural return—but that struggle must take place in the United States. Consequently, in the event where the Afro-Americans' demands are not satisfied, what means do they think of using to make an eventual return to Africa?

After asking where the audience member was from and determining he was from the Senegal, Malcolm responds:

> Number one, *if we are extremists we're not ashamed of it. In fact, the conditions that our people suffer are extreme and an extreme illness cannot be cured with moderate medicine.* We're not against physical migration of our people back to Africa. Those who want to go back and have something to contribute to the development of Africa, we are for them, because we feel a strong Africa makes us strong also…. Those of us in the West were sold. We didn't sell ourselves. This is the point we want our brothers, when they're judging us, always to keep in their minds. We didn't go to America voluntarily.[22]

Our unbending commitment to the precondition is often received as an "extremist" position. Psychic militancy is in fact about consistently taking this "extremist" position despite moralizing accusations and, following Malcolm's unflinching reminder, to not to be ashamed of it. More importantly to the work of this book, however, is for us to commit to the associative follow-up in Malcolm's statement: *the conditions that our people suffer are extreme and an extreme illness cannot be cured with moderate medicine*. What Malcolm models for us in his psychic militancy is that it is not enough to have our endpoint just be the extremist position; rather, in his response, he highlights the necessity to remain militantly clear that our "extremism" exists in perpetual antagonistic relation with the essential violence enacted on us. In the extremist position we are affirming a truth of the source of that violence and tethering ourselves to material

reality; we are engaging in a forceful and willful refusal, one that interrupts the ability of psychic intrusions to mobilize psychic inversions.

In this case, the psychic inversion we are invited into is that the extremism begins with Malcolm, with his "movement," with the supposed violence "they" impose on the state or the dogmatic ideological positions they enforce. In his psychic militancy, Malcolm cuts right through this seduction: "*if* we are extremists, we are not ashamed of it." The assumption transforms into a contested conditional, and even in the conditional space, it is rooted in the militant clarity afforded to him by material reality and historicity. His psychic militancy does not end there; he does not become mired in the psycho-politico-affective baggage that saturates the lexical accusation of extremism. Malcom also does not allow it to rework "*entire parameters (theatres) of conflict* through the multi-faceted conquest and colonization of words, definitions, and narratives,"[23] as Rodríguez warns. Malcolm instead brings us back to the originary source of extremism *and* the precondition to which we must commit. Chattel slavery is what is extreme. Stealing Black folks from their homelands and selling them is what is extreme. Refusing to name how the carceral violence of the state remains intimately linked up with this sordid history of violence against Black folks is what is extreme. Feigning that this "extreme illness" can "be cured with moderate medicine" is what is extreme.

The repetition of these points is as key for us as it was in a room poised to favorably listen to Malcolm's message. These statements can read like platitudes if we are not attuned to the psycho-politicoaffective realm and the psychic intrusions it mobilizes within us. Even the most obvious truths are meant to be muddled by "confusion mongers" and the seemingly innocent identifications we are conscripted into, as Fanon reminds us. We can return to the previous chapter, for example, and remember how psychic intrusions intend to deflect from material reality and, by so doing, attempt to demobilize our commitments to revolutionary futures— to futures where, among other things, Black folks' suffering is not an inevitability; a future where organized movements that antagonize white supremacy are not accused of being extremists just for insisting that the material conditions

that cause suffering must be dismantled. As Malcolm shows us, there are no platitudes against the repetitious racist violence of the state, empire, colonialism and settler colonialism; only forceful repetitions of psychic militancy, which can simultaneously rivet us to the precondition while disrupting the psychic settlement of oppressive systems. Every instance in which we engage in a routine of psychic refusal of a seemingly mundane recounting of material reality and history— no matter how rudimentary or self-evident it may seem—is one in which we resist the rewiring of our interiority. In doing so, we do not allow abusive structures to do their work in secret, in private, or to feed off their belief that we will not confront them in real time; we do not retreat away from our extremism with shame.

Let us recall the opening vignette of this book, the assaultive disruption by a Zionist at a conference panel titled "Talking about Palestine in Psychoanalysis." His incursion into the space was absolutely meant to disrupt the ability of people to imagine Palestinians, or Palestine, in psychoanalysis, let alone in the real world. "There is no such thing as Palestinians!" he screamed. This is of course a colonial confession, one in which we could get mired, just as with the accusation of "extremist" lobbed against Malcom. If we return to our discussion about process vs. content, however, we can attune to something else. Any version of *content*—that is, even if the aggressive Zionist intruder had come to politely "dialogue" or insist to me, as Zionists often do, that "we are all 'neighbors' but our governments make us enemies"—the *process* would have remained the same. The process of a Zionist feeling entitled to recreate, or parallel, the expansive reach of Zionism into all spaces that dare register indigenous Palestinian presence is the same process that would unironically affix "extreme" to Malcolm's revolutionary project. The circumstances are different, but the logic repeats, meant to derail, to disorient, to ensnare. In this matrix, we are meant to be distracted from the material conditions unfolding before our eyes (a microcosm of a larger condition and logic, as Daqqa reminds us). In the case of Malcolm, the deflection is from the real-world, everyday violence against Black folks; and in the case of the conference, the deflection is from the reality of Palestine. Marshaling

psychic militancy in that moment was less about combating a literal forgetting of what Zionism is and the violence this man was enacting on me, on all of us, in the name of his wretched ideology. Rather, it was about committing to a practice of attunement in real time; a honing of a skill that refuses to waver from the precondition and recognizes every attempt at intrusion as one meant to at once normalize identifications that stabilize power and destabilize our revolutionary futures.

In our repetitious force to wrench the compulsion to repeat from the violent hands of its psychoanalytic architects, we are reminded that we must cede no psychic space. We must be extremists, and we must not be ashamed of it. We must commit to these positions not out of a vacuous or reactionary oppositional framework, but rather because we understand the intent of the psycho-politico-affective to work on well-worn channels of sociability, identifications with "goodness," and with liberal notions of fairness, reason, and compromise. And because we understand that this psychic intent is not innocent but rather meant to reproduce models of relationality that work to stabilize power's hold on us—whether that is in colonial, settler colonial, or imperialist conditions. Our extremist positions help us remain militantly clear on the material conditions that dictate our behavior, the parameters of our fight, and the ever-expanding contested space of struggle. More, they help guide us in understanding our own power against the oppressor's counterinsurgent insistence on our ineffectuality. Speaking of the "nameless compromises" in which political leaders are enticed to engage, including the affective seduction to believe in the magnanimity of the colonizer, Fanon insists that we must remain clear that "whatever gains the colonized make through armed or political struggle, they are not the result of the colonizer's good will or goodness of heart but to the fact that he can longer postpone such concessions."[24] We must remain clear that our extremism is meant to make the *colonizer* bend, *not us*, just as we saw in Coulthard's disciplined resentment.

Our "extremism" reminds us that ideological positions like Zionism, for example, animate a psycho-politico-affective response, demobilizing identification with Palestinians and their desire for liberation by inverting

the killer and the victim, the powerful and the powerless, the settler and the native. This is similar to the logic that positions Indigenous people of Turtle Island as the intruders, Malcolm as the violent "racist," migrants as "criminals," or trans people as "monsters." Psychic militancy disrupts the naturalization of such identifications with the oppressor, to play off psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi's notion of identification with the aggressor. The practice of psychic militancy repetitively returns us to the fact, as Assata Shakur powerfully articulates, that "the mind destroying machine works overtime, getting us to crave power and money instead of justice. We've all been a bit brainwashed and confused." We have all been coercively aggressed upon precisely because invading the psychic province is a targeted means to derail us from our revolutionary fights. It is only our psychic militancy that follows through on Shakur's insight that "the act of being free has a lot to do with becoming unbrainwashed"[25]—that is, psychically divested from the "mind destroying machine" intent on becoming a permanent fixture within us. Psychically divested, and therefore counter-invested enough to be extremist in *holding the line*, in being militantly fettered to the precondition.

There is a material and political currency and importance for us to practice what it means to hold the line as part of our practice of psychic militancy—to not rush to indulge the impulse we feel to rehabilitate and repair, and, importantly, to take stock of what is being played on within us when we become aware of this pull. We need to be honest about feeling the impulse to loosen our position, and then our conversations and actions should include understanding what is being psychically demanded of us in the moment of that seduction, in the moment when we register the work of Assata's mind-destroying machine that makes us fear our extremism. What part of the psycho-politico-affective is being animated within us in these moments, as with the organizers who felt afraid in the previous chapter? What does it mean to understand where this enticement might come from, to attune to it being a symptomatic register—which might include multiple and overlapping nodes of pressure—and then commit to unpacking and recognizing all the moving pieces rather than just accept it at face value?

The psychoanalytic method is about holding the multiplicity of possibilities and retaining an "even hovering attention" to the axis of experience *and* desire. In despecializing psychoanalysis for our revolutionary futures we can begin here—a reminder that the point of ideology is to hide seamlessly, having us act and orient ourselves to the world in ways and modes of relating that appear "normative" and "organic" or, as psychoanalyst Nancy Caro Hollander says, "common sense."[26] The sharper we can get at recognizing, pointing out, and outlining all the moving pieces that pull us into identifications with power, the more equipped we will be at warding off psychic intrusions and therefore the more honed our practice of psychic militancy can become.

VIGNETTE 1: PSYCHIC MILITANCY IN THE MUNDANE

The session felt heavier from the top of the hour with more silence than usual; more sighs; some pacing. My patient, a Congolese organizer in her forties was a liaison to a European non-profit organization working to raise awareness about the disastrous "humanitarian crisis" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My patient resented the amorphous terminology of "humanitarian crisis" and felt deeply conflicted about doing work with a non-profit that was primarily focused on tepid "awareness campaigns" rather than a systemic analysis of the racial capitalism and imperialism that created the condition of underdevelopment she and her family had experienced first-hand. She often used our clinical space to explore her conflicted feelings around the many political compromises she felt herself having to make; to "check" herself and her "reality," as she referred to it; and to excavate political meaning from the anger she often felt "pulsing through" her. Back in our session that day, she took a deep breath, exhaling through her teeth as she said, "I'm regulating, I'm regulating. Only so I can think, Lara." She perhaps anticipated that the disciplining function of anger regulation is nothing I would reach to or prescribe. I tell her to take her time; that whatever she is trying to formulate seems important, and that I sense she is also trying to figure out a way to distill something larger than

words might be able to capture. I wanted to be sure she knew that the affect of what she was working through was registering with me, despite the lack of words—a reminder to me, as much as her, that our overfocus on words can also detract from the important psychic and relational work that is being done.

With her next exhale, she said:

> I'm disturbed by this phrase "senseless violence." It fucks with my head because it makes me feel like I am over-reacting or something. Senseless. It's that word, specifically, fucking gets under my skin. And it is something I constantly hear with this work I am doing with these people. This one woman in particular, every fucking time I see her: "can you believe this *senseless* violence that is happening, these poor people, as if they don't suffer enough."

She puts up her middle fingers and falls back into her chair. I ask her about the over-reacting part—it is something we have visited before, in different situations—here it is again, pestering her.

> Yeah, and you know, I actually know it's not an exaggeration, even if I question myself. My body jolts when I hear it [senseless] because there is something not *right* about it, something so cheap, so shallow, so lacking in transparency about what the violence actually is. And what the cause is? The jolt actually helps me pay attention to what's happening. Like clearly there is something else there, I know we've talked about that a lot, maybe something I can't get to otherwise.

Then her face drops. I ask what happened, noting that something seemed to shift quickly and that I did not quite know what to make of it.

> I just remembered my past therapist for a second. Any time I would bring something like this, she would say I am "over-intellectualizing," that it wasn't really about what was being said or done at work or

> wherever else, that I focused on that as a distraction from something deeper, blah blah, I *know* you know how it goes.

She laughed. I respond with my own knowing laugh, “Yes, I do.” And then I add: “For your previous therapist, for others, the anger is the deflection; you attempting to be precise about what is being activated in you is the deflection. It is never the attempt to domesticate your anger that is the deflection, is it?” Her eyes light up: “Never a good idea to have a Black woman stay angry, right?”—I nod and say, “I suppose it makes you particularly dangerous to them.” She sighs and says with a determination that alerts me to how something has “clicked”:

> Yes, but that is *exactly* why I can’t let this idea that I am being over the top be what guides me. I *know* I am not. It’s a fucking semantics game to these people. There is nothing “senseless” about this violence; it is created, it is a long-term game for these people against my people, this didn’t start yesterday like it does for the woman at work, in her mind, like she just discovered the moon.

She pauses, wiping a rage-filled tear.

> I think it bothers me, “senseless,” because it makes people go *there*. I don’t want to go there. I want us to talk about the real shit that is happening. Why are we here?? This semantics shit makes us start debating *that*; but I’m the one over-intellectualizing?!

If we learn from Sara Ahmed’s reminder that willfulness is “a daily grind,” the mundane emerges as an important site of analysis *and* opportunity to practice psychic militancy in moments that have already been transformed into normative or “natural” experiences meant to shore up a dominant social order. What my patient describes to me is, by all accounts, mundane. If nothing else, this is due to the familiarity we all have with puerile and analytically anemic liberal discourses around peace,

violence, and what constitutes both. It is also mundane because of how casually it is articulated, how it hides seamlessly in common parlance, and how integrated it is into spaces of "good work" such as the "humanitarian aid" fields or the psy-disciplines. The word *senseless* is doing considerable ideological work in this scenario and my patient is viscerally attuned to it—even if she initially struggles to pinpoint it in session. In fact, the struggle to make sense of what was happening was our entry point, a meaning-making that allowed a non-foreclosed process to emerge in real time; a process that did not remain mired in the content, and certainly not in the singularly focused (and antiquated) reading of a defensive displacement into intellectualization. In the struggle to make meaning, my patient becomes alert to *something else* within the mundane—a symptomatic register, one that "fucks with [her] head," makes her question if she is exaggerating her anger even when she is aware, like Malcolm, that "the conditions that [her] people suffer are extreme." Somatically and psychically, this symptomatic register "jolts" her, alerting her to the incongruity of material reality not only with what is being articulated, but what she is being conscripted into—a relational pull to join in and identify with a "cheap, shallow" and fundamentally dishonest, unmoored analysis of a political condition which has material, historical, and systemic roots. The repetitiveness with which this mundane exchange happens—something she "constantly hears"—contributes to the jolt. The consistency with which this happens alerts her that there is something working on her and through her, to return to Ahmed, attuning her to the psychic grammar of intrusions mobilized through the psycho-politico-affective.

Our therapeutic and relational space, because of its own political commitment, opens up the possibility not only for exploration, but active—willful—meaning-making and militant psychic practice to trace and understand the psychic intrusions that are happening. In this case, she is being subjected to conversations that are devoid of political and material grounding, ones that she intuits are purposeful and meant to veer her off course. She identifies a trap of "semantics" that has the intent to lure her and others away from the pulse of material reality, even as her own

militancy is what is pejoratively labeled as “over-intellectualized.” Her realization conjures Rodríguez’s warning that “lexical warfare” is a prominent and increasingly vital arm of counterinsurgency, and therefore, PSYOPS. He reminds us: “lexical warfare … reorganizes and redirects *entire parameters (theatres) of conflict* through the multifaceted conquest and colonization of words, definitions, and narratives. Hence, language is not merely weaponized, but forms the conceptual and institutional terrain on which warfare is actually waged.”[27] Even without Rodríguez’s words to describe her intuition, my patient *knows* it is happening; she is aware that she is one of many psychic vessels meant to internalize and identify with this messaging of “senseless violence,” itself articulated and disseminated as part of a larger project of ideological discipline. In the lexical “reorganization of entire parameters,” she—and we—are meant to register the “senseless” violence as being haphazard, non-directed, just as likely to happen in any other geographic location as in the Congo, color-blind, and inevitable, as though it is constitutive of the people of the Congo to suffer.

In the lexical PSYOPS, we are meant to identify with the good liberal, seduced into the commodified performative care and despair they so expertly peddle. In this relational arrangement, we are not to speak of who creates the conditions for suffering; we are not to speak of the machinery of imperial and racial capitalist violence and its overlords; and we are certainly not to point out that “senseless” seems to make its appearance only when we speak of “poor” people, of racialized masses whose birthright is suffering in the white imaginary—never when militants or freedom fighters or revolutionaries engage in violence. That violence is implicitly coded as emanating from a wrong sense, a destructive sense, and one that is never rooted in the condition that created the militant to begin with. My patient’s anger is also never afforded the same generosity, gendered, raced and classed in its unique destructiveness. Her militant political commitments are also never afforded the same generosity—they are extremist, too much, too intellectualized. Her co-worker, just as her therapist, are Fanon’s confusion-mongers, “interven[ing] between the exploited and the authorities”[28] with intention to reconfigure her psychic terrain and expel the militant from

within her. This intent is not innocent on an individual or structural level but rather meant to stabilize the world in which they comfortably find their space and place. A world predicated on us succumbing to psychic intrusions that uphold a normative social order that, among other things, discerns who experiences “senseless” violence and who is deserving of its precision.

Our clinical work together, itself a practice in a relationally bound psychic militancy and the repetition it requires, does not deflect from the individual impact of this experience on my patient, as many psychoanalysts might accuse those of us committed to continuing Fanon’s sociogenic work of doing. To the contrary, it is the knowledge and attunement to how this inquiry was intimately tied up with her unique being as Congolese, her race, her family dynamics and their immigration story, her political commitments, and the sociopolitical positioning of her job, that provided access to a textured, dynamic, and unfolding understanding of how and why these intrusions might find their way to settle within her. Rather than foreclose possibilities, which is always the technical anxiety, our shared political (and clinical) commitment to psychic militancy created a capacious and generative arena of experience beyond the individualized, and therefore atomized, shackles of which Fanon speaks. Freed of this trap and committed to being grounded in the reality principle, as much as in the power of the symbolic where applied and theoretical psychoanalysis typically dwells, we could practice how to read *process* rather than remain mired in content.

Psychic militancy affirms that our psyche is a contested space. As we have discussed, the psychic terrain is a pointed target of intrusion, but it can also act as a powerful counterforce when we practice engaging in willful refusals. These refusals are the method by which we can remain tethered to the precondition and therefore antagonistic to the stories power tells. Rather than collapsing into shame or feeling despairing about the ceaseless psychic onslaught, starting at the precondition asserts that in ceding no psychic space we are better positioned to carefully track and work out the contradictions inherent to identifications, as we discussed in previous chapters. Psychic militancy rivets us to the assurance that violent structures

will mobilize against us, *especially* when we become clear about their intention to stay our revolutionary fire. More importantly, as for my patient, despite this crush, psychic militancy allows us still to affirm what we know to be materially true. In her "I *know* I am not," my patient practiced an insistence on presence, a repetition to herself and to me in our therapeutic space, that articulated a necessary position. She was holding a line, practicing a psychic stamina that rooted her in the precondition and offered a deeply sophisticated political analysis of what was already available within her. This space itself was primed for displacement by the psycho-politico-affective and the confusion-mongers that exploit it, but her willful practice disrupted the ease with which this could otherwise happen.

We should not understand this as an individualistic indulgence, but rather as having a psychic and affective utility. Through precise engagement with the mundane there emerges a praxis of psychic militancy dedicated to working out and through what we psychically invest in and what we are conscripted, seduced, or coerced into upholding through identifications. This is a productive and generative process that works away from the trappings of individualist rot and instead focuses on what otherwise might go psychically undetected in service of our revolutionary futures. Rather than reaching for an explanation of a seemingly individualized act (internally or externally) that is wrenched from its political context, then, as my patient was repeatedly invited to, learning to read the mechanics of a process allows us also to apprehend the political project of alienation. We can notice the patterned intrusions that create the rush to dis-associate, to individualize, to disidentify, all of which is a pointed attempt to dislodge us from a larger revolutionary political fabric.

Following Assata, Fanon, Malcolm, and Daqqa's own practices of psychic militancy we can learn to psychically divest from the impositions put upon us—just like my patient when she willfully asserts: "I don't want to go there. I want us to talk about the real shit that is happening." Psychic divestment includes shedding our own conscious and, more importantly, unconscious investments in notions of civility, politesse, or socialization that are constitutively invested in psycho-politico-affective violence but are

otherwise disguised as normative, even liberal, values. It means divesting from spaces where naming "senseless violence" is not only a legitimate talking point but also the endpoint of political action. Psychic divestment rejects this premise entirely and allows us to remain focused on the precondition as militants who do not bend to the coerciveness of individualized repair, to the attraction of liberal invitations for dialogue with oppressors and genocidaires. Divestment involves staging, in Avgi Saketopoulou's words, "an encounter that stands to rearrange the terms by which the relationship proceeds"[29]—or, importantly for psychic militancy against psychic intrusions, how it does *not* proceed. Psychic divestment grounds us in the starting point for this type of psychic militancy. Recalibrating this starting point and disrupting the normativity of psycho-politico-affective violence, ensures that we remain grounded in, rather than perpetually deflected from, the precondition: total liberation.

VIGNETTE 2: "WHAT IF NO ONE SIDED WITH COLONIALISM?"

"What happens … when we build movements that refuse colonial recognition as a starting point and turn inwards, building a politics of refusal that is generative?" asks Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in *As We Have Always Done,* "what if no one sided with colonialism?"[30]

The question is as evocative as it is practical. In its commitment to psychic refusals—another texture of the "turn inwards"—it is as unbending in its psychic militancy as Fanon's precondition and Coulthard's disciplined resentment. Colonial recognition, that is, the shoring up of the settler state and its proxies' authority to confer legitimacy (and humanity) on the colonized is a coerced compromise. Practicing psychic militancy is not only to antagonize and disrupt the naturalization of this authority, but to repeatedly contour (and therefore de-contour) the mechanics—the social, political, juridical, and relational history—that brought its authority into being.

In Fanonian fashion, Simpson takes us a step further in her militancy with the clarity of her follow-up question: what if no one sided with colonialism? Any version of compromise, no matter how small or big, is one that sides with colonialism. Simpson is not afraid of the specter of psychoanalytic "splitting"; hers is a bigger project, one committed to a militancy that affirms Malcolm's extremist position in the face of extreme violence. Any movement away from this would betray the ferocity needed to antagonize the original violence: genocide, displacement, dispossession, and continued instantiations of theft and coercion that are meant to hide in commonplace disavowals. In the foreclosure of settler colonial logics, Simpson's provocation opens a grounding possibility that would otherwise be labeled far-fetched, unrealistic, or unattainable: *what if no one sided with colonialism?* What if we were to begin with this to insist on Foluke Taylor's future conditional: what would we have had to do *now* to ensure the revolutionary futures we struggle for? Psychic militancy is one weapon in our arsenal, ensuring that we do not side with colonialism; that we do not identify with the oppressor; that we do not bend under the weight of psychic intrusions that are meant to dislodge us from material reality and the struggle needed to dismantle violent systems to usher in the revolutionary futures we desire.

To be able willfully to refuse to side with colonialism, to "decide, in one and the same act, to break the vicious circle and inaugurate the reign of freedom,"[31] to recall Fanon, we must be militantly attuned to *when* colonial logics are unfolding. As with all modes of psychic militancy, this practice is a political commitment and one that we must engage with the same repetitious force as the insistence of the logics to repeat themselves across settler conditions. I provide the example below because many of us may be able to extrapolate its particularities to our own fields of study and expertise; and because, after approximately two years of a genocide in Palestine, it might present itself as self-evident. I am particularly interested in the instances that appear to us as self-evident, as easy to read, or as so rudimentary that they do not need our continual attention. Like the mundane, our tendency to overlook logics of oppression in the familiar

creates a porous potential for psychic intrusions—a vulnerability that can animate the psycho-politico-affective in undetected ways. I also provide this specific instance as an explicit example of violence done by the psychoanalytic field on a global scale; an example that, over the course of its unfolding, helped me uncover a lynchpin in my own thinking about and being attentive to the *something else* that I, in a very Fanonian sense, *felt* was happening, but did not yet have the words for. As we have discussed already, this *something else* is often felt on a visceral level, one that I have found psychic intrusions operate on, and that the psycho-politico-affective explicitly muddles, confuses, and erases in service of ideological normativity. I also hope that, in providing this example, I am militantly outlining how these possibilities of colonial collusion by psychoanalysis do not just live within the clinic, nor are they only enacted on the individual level through the analytic dyad, but rather are structural, systemic, and, through their insistence on apolitical, universal humanism, have *global reach*. This example is one more reason why a despecialization of psychoanalysis is long overdue.

Against the protestation of a large portion of their global membership, the International Association for Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (IARPP) decided to hold their June 2019 annual conference in the settler state now known as Israel and, specifically, in colonial Tel Aviv.[32] The decision set off years of "negotiations" and justifications by the primarily US-based board of IARPP, an organization that prides itself on relational attunement and the practice of a more sociopolitically engaged psychoanalysis that does not eschew political life in favor of the intrapsychic. IARPP's bad faith decision is helpful for us to track because it provides us with a very visible and archetypal example of how "liberal" modalities of psychoanalytic practice socially reproduce settler colonial dynamics, especially when Palestine is involved. In not siding with colonialism we can name without hesitancy, with no pretense to "fairness" or reason or justification, that IARPP deliberately crossed an international picket line called for by more than 20,000 Palestinian social workers and psychologists.[33] This truth-telling brings into focus the mechanisms by

which psychoanalytic associations and clinicians, especially from the global North, not only disavow the comprehensive violence of settler colonial systems but also actively perpetuate and participate in this violence by pathologizing, in this instance, resistance to Israeli settler colonial apartheid and by diminishing the value of Palestinian life and wellbeing.

The glaring contradictions in the IARPP's positions, seemingly indecipherable to the IARPP leadership—all of whom are psychoanalysts—is one of many clues that help us retain our grounding focus. The conference was to be in so-called Tel Aviv under the banner theme, "Imagining with Eyes Wide Open: Relational Journeys." We might be seduced into dismissing this decision as only settler and imperial arrogance, especially if we are familiar with the violent innocence of liberal organizations (often not distinguishable from the hard-right and settler versions of their imagined selves). In our psychic militancy, however, we must practice attuning to another texture. The decision to hold the conference in the Zionist settler state and then to name it "Imagining with Eyes Wide Open: Relational Journeys" is a colonial confession that betrays the *conscious* naming of whose relational journey is worth imagining and who is registered by colonizing eyes, even when they are "wide open." Highlighting the conscious act is key because it actively antagonizes the generous *unconscious* intention that is often ascribed to violent acts such as this by psychoanalysts who are invested in stabilizing their world order. In our practice of psychic militancy, in deciding willfully to not side with colonialism, we must become skilled in demanding to unveil the mechanics of seemingly common processes: how does an organization imagine a conference in a genocidal settler colonial state without explicitly dis-imagining the Palestinians who have continuously lived there? The colonial confession was further highlighted in an absurd pre-conference roundtable discussion that aimed to speak about "the absence of Palestinians to look at the obstacles to an Israeli Palestinian encounter"—even here blatantly disavowing the countless encounters that happen between occupier and occupied, colonizer and colonized under a brutal settler colonial occupation of Palestine, from the river to the sea. This same round-table asked the

seemingly innocent questions: “Can we create a dialogue about the absence of dialogue? Can we give presence in the absence of presence? Is the absence a powerful protest or a refusal to see another?”[34]

In curbing our (very understandable) instinct to roll our eyes at the incredibly misattuned, trite, and absurd nature of such questions, we can instead hone our psychic militancy to name how the mobilization of psychoanalysis here acts in much the same way that Edward Bernays intended, as we discussed in Chapter 1. In marshaling the “innocence” of the so-called talking cure, psychoanalytic agents of the state, the confusion-mongers, or what Aimé Césaire labels as “‘obscurers’ … use ‘rigged investigations’ [to] confirm [the colonized’s] primitivism.”[35] These obscurers weaponize and abuse theory to psychically intrude on those who engage in the politics of refusal—whether that be a patient, a supervisee, a student, an analysand, or in the case of IARPP, Palestinians and those who believe in their right to self-determination. For example, one of the co-organizers, a US-based hardline Zionist psychoanalyst, persistently engaged in paternalistic and Orientalizing behavior, actively recruiting what he explicitly named “good Arabs” to sideline what he designated as militantly oppositional Arabs. Another prominent senior psychoanalyst, who has made her career through the appropriation of a neo-Hegelian premise to push “nonviolence” even in the violent asymmetry of occupied Palestine, was incensed by the dissent and protest. Her concern was how the *organization* might come undone under the pressure we were exerting and how her own “labor” was not being recognized. Speaking very publicly to colleagues about me specifically, she raged about how we “collapsed” issues and how “not all board members” were bad, going so far as to say, “It is Lara that is the problem, *we have to get rid of her*.” The primitive “bad Arab” who dares step out of their place is always the troublemaker that must be eliminated in service of settler futures, both in fantasy and in practice.

Tellingly, the IARPP replicated the same strategies Fanon outlined in his *El Moudjahid* essay that opened this chapter, appealing to abstract notions of “reason,” “civility,” and, of course, “dialogue”—all the while

disavowing how these terms and notions are decidedly not neutral and, in fact, rely on racialized, classed, and gendered codes to gain traction. These codes resemble what Margarita Palacios and Stephen Sheehi describe as the mechanics of white innocence, which "within its habitus of universal humanity, permits us also to consider how the flesh itself that is constituent of the 'we' is not ideologically and socially the same throughout this heterogeneity of the third-person collective."[36] The IARPP provided the ideological valance of "impartiality" and "openness" as the operative structural process of collusion with racism and settler colonialism. We may miss these patterned logics and the psychic grammar of intrusions if we are not engaged in psychic militancy.

In our militancy we can name (and shame) how the psychoanalytic field brazenly deploys tropes of "dialogue" and "neutrality" to normalize and co-sign (prescribe) such processes in the mainstream imaginary. We also can assert that psychoanalytic clinicians who are invested in stabilizing oppressive structures censure dissidents who engage in refusals while simultaneously deflecting from their use of coercion, control, and domination. A co-presidential IARPP statement makes this case well:

> We will be extending invitations to Palestinian colleagues, and we will work to enable their presence with us. Rather than foreclosing those issues and silencing conversation, we aim to create within our relational psychoanalytic conference an open and safe space in which attendees across the political spectrum can engage and exchange views. We believe that dialogue, more than ever, is needed across divides.[37]

While on the surface this statement by two practicing psychoanalysts might strike some as "reasonable," if we operationalize what we have learned about psychic intrusions and the psycho-politicoaffective plane, we can commit to psychic militancy. This helps us sustain a material analysis that tethers us to the structural violence at hand. The statement emerges as an archetypal hybrid of liberal bad faith, combining the "white innocence" of the United States with the disavowal and nomenclature of Zionism. The

weaponization of language is a contrivance meant to shut down, not create, space, and legitimizes explicitly non-Palestinian voices as the arbiters and protectors of Palestinian freedom of speech. Just as Dylan Rodríguez highlights through his study of lexical warfare, the statement acts as testimony to the predetermined parameters of conversation or "dialogue," one that communicates little interest in material reality. In this way, psychoanalysts, and psychoanalytic organizations, quickly come to embody what Fanon warned were the ways in which clinicians act as agents of the state. Even if Palestinian and non-Palestinian Arab clinicians had been willing to betray the Palestinian call for boycott, most were not able to travel to the genocidal state now known as Israel as they would have faced criminal proceedings in their home countries. Finally, we know that even if they were able to receive "visas" (to their own country) the process is intended to be psychologically humiliating and subjecting Palestinians to such processes *just to be present at a conference* would be an unconscionable violation—and one that also not incidentally engages in the politics of colonial recognition, as Simpson warns. The work of psychic militancy is to instead retain access to the unbending precondition: what if instead no one, *none of us*, sided with colonialism?

As with the opening vignette of this book (at yet another psychoanalytic conference), the seduction out of psychic militancy is to be conscripted, perhaps even enticed and seduced, into reading the IARPP's response to the dissent of its members as a psychoanalytic "enactment" of the irreparable violence between Zionists and Palestinians. What this reading intends for us to strategically miss is the vibrant example of how organizations, especially in the psyprofessions, ideologically and politically collude with power—not as a by-product or symptom, but as constitutive of their practice and theory. This is because collusion and complicity operate within a shared structural, systemic, and political tradition of white supremacy that emerges out of coloniality and settler colonialism. What the traditional psychoanalytic reading also displaces is how calls for "dialogue" and neutrality—mainstays of its modern practice—are weaponized, here offensively insisting in the face of a genocidal machine that there could ever be a "safe space" where

meaningful dialogue could emerge without first dismantling the colonial machinery. This example demonstrates how dialogue itself can be a structural tool to enact the full reach of oppression psychically, miring the colonized in an identification with the magnanimity of the colonizer.

Fanon was very clear on this pointed tool of domination:

> There is no end to the politeness and consideration [by the colonizer]…. The colonized, who took up arms not only because they were dying of hunger and witnessing the disintegration of their society but also because the colonist treated them like animals and considered them brutes, respond very favorably to such measures. These psychological devices defuse their hatred. Experts and sociologists are a guiding force behind these colonialist maneuvers and conduct numerous studies on the subject of complexes—the complex of frustration, the complex of aggressiveness, and the complex of colonizability. The colonized subject is upgraded and attempts are made to disarm him psychologically and, naturally, with a few coins.[38]

Being invited to a conference in a settler colony, being lured into normalization of colonial presence and daily violence, is not an arbitrary nor an innocent ask—it is meant to disarm psychologically, with a few crumbs. In our practice of psychic militancy we must name this intention as following the expansionist logic of settler colonialism—here in its Zionist instantiation—because it seeks to regularize the "normativity" of the Zionist entity and its capacity to host seemingly "normal" professional gatherings which themselves become legitimizing spaces and forces. Psychic militancy commits us to be persistent in not only analyzing these processes ourselves but also to name them publicly so they cannot settle within our interiority, or that of others, with ease. This should not be understood as performative posturing. Practicing how we remain committed to never siding with colonialism is also a practice of returning to the precondition. It is a willful act of repetitiously tracing the associative processes that are mobilized through the psycho-politico-affective, that is, the series of identifications

(with the magnanimity of the colonizer, for example) and attendant dis-identifications (Palestinians who are too recalcitrant or primitive to receive such generosity). It is an exercise and practice of rooting ourselves in a structural, political analysis, with the understanding that this is necessary because something is *always* happening on the level of the psychic—for good or for bad.

When we analyze these very public events, we can also practice how to think of them in terms of the *longue durée* of a political movement. Because psycho-politico-affective intrusions work to atomize and exact a temporal stamp that is isolated, this *longue durée* thinking (that matches the theoretical position of the unconscious and how material is never lost), challenges us to wrap our minds around events in a more militant way. We must be interested in the psychic elements at play: where people's analysis goes, the identifications that are being brought up and mobilized. But also, we must become aware of how things can, not accidentally, but rather ideologically and therefore purposively, detract from the focus on Palestine, for example, as was intended by the IARPP, or any other condition of oppression that follows a similar logic.

If we do not remain psychically militant about our connection to material reality and to how these larger political analyses must include attunement to the psychic and affective realm, the sure thing will happen: we will side with colonialism and cede our revolutionary aims for full and complete liberation.

VIGNETTE 3: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SWORD AND THE NECK

In a now celebrated 1970 interview with Richard Carleton in Beirut, Ghassan Kanafani, Palestinian revolutionary, author, and the Beirut-based representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) brilliantly embodies psychic militancy. The interview might already be well known to the reader, circulated on our social media timelines at least once weekly, especially in the last years of genocide in Palestine. The interview

is remarkable in its clarity, with Kanafani tackling the arrogance of white supremacy and paternalistic colonialism and imperialism head on—refusing to back down, refusing to succumb to the pretense of innocent or neutral "journalism," defiantly returning us to the precondition in real time. For the purposes of this book, the interview is especially important to study for its lessons about how one enacts psychic militancy by repetitiously engaging in psychic refusals, naming and disrupting the imperious intrusion of the psycho-politico-affective. Kanafani's repetition itself alerts us to the attempts of settler colonial reality-bending to influence and activate our psychic world along well-worn affective plains and circuits. The intent is not only to derail the legitimacy of revolutionary movements, but also to conscript *us*, the viewers, into dis-identifying from the revolutionary struggle for Palestinian liberation (and therefore all other struggles that share similar logics and aims). Away from the reconfiguration of our psychic struggle through psychic militancy, we can feel compelled—seduced—into making psychic choices that work to only stabilize normative structures and reinscribe settler colonial and imperial possibilities and their futures, rather than ours. Kanafani's unbending militancy helps commit us to the latter.

Many readers might be familiar with Kanafani's rapier responses to the arrogant questions that only the violent mediocrity of a colonizer would allow to be delivered without irony. While I reproduce and analyze the exchange below, in our commitment to reclaiming disavowals and attuning to the violent psychic grammar of power, I want to draw attention also to the less-circulated "journalistic" intro that prefaces Carleton's interview. Competing to not be outdone by his Orientalist counterparts, Carleton opens by setting the stage of where we will meet Kanafani, in "Beirut … the most Westernized of all Arab capitals [where] the evidence of the French colonial period here is as stuck as it is in Quebec." In the psychic association that is immediately mobilized, we are already primed to meet Kanafani and register *him* as the intruder, a foreign Palestinian brute who is out of place in this otherwise "Mediterranean tourist paradise" that, through the specter of Kanafani's revolutionary struggle, is being subjected to a "slowly

disappearing past splendor." Carleton's message is a civilizing one, representative of a Eurocentric social order that prioritizes reason, sensibility, and moralization over the primitive rage of "Palestinian guerrillas" who "are not like the Vietcong … in no way illicit," but rather "totally legitimate … with a three-story office building complete with all the amenities … as modern as any in Sydney." In Carleton's racist and carceral imaginary, it is an affront that revolutionaries, and especially "gun-toting guerrillas" are afforded the dignity of "legitimacy" let alone modern amenities. In his psychic collapse, he confesses to us that these luxuries belong only in places like Sydney, or in a nostalgic pre-revolutionary Beirut where "timid business executives" once rightfully walked those same halls. The revolutionary's place is not in three-story buildings, but in social exile —though their place is decidedly also not in tunnels, as we have learned, because those, too, are meant to psychically transform into sordid dwellings of unchecked primitivity.

In front of the PFLP building, Carleton is shocked by the inability to negotiate with armed guerrillas who tell him he cannot take photos; "there was no arguing" he states, conscripting the viewer into empathizing with his plight against these most outrageously unreasonable thugs who will not allow for this innocent, not propagandistic, journalistic documentation to occur. Here is where we first meet Kanafani as narrated by Carleton, someone who has been *actively* "plotting the destruction of both the Zionists and the reactionary Arabs" after he "fled" Palestine, *passively*, as though no external force were present, in 1948. The prior narration has been Carleton's, animating his imperious gaze of Beirut, both present and past, and of Palestine and Palestinians. When we meet Kanafani in his gaze, however, the narration shifts; Carleton is no longer interested in his self-assured point of view but rather shifts to quoting Kanafani who, "as he puts it," fled Palestine "from Zionist terror." This shift is meant to signal something to us and mobilizes the psycho-politico-affective in a direction that stabilizes settler colonial logics and power. Carleton is intent on insinuating himself into our psyche, into pre-existing civilizational narratives of "reason" and reasonability. He is the trustworthy, impartial

narrator, ensuring that the disidentification with Kanafani and with Palestine and its liberation is also mobilized, of course, in the service of "rationality." With Carleton as reliable narrator, Kanafani is fixed in his place as *not* so. With the predictability of settler colonial logics, Kanafani's reality is conditional at best, a mere point of view: "as he puts it." This after all is the man who is "plotting the destruction" of both Zionists *and* Arabs—he is not to be trusted in his extremist positions, just like Malcolm, or in his sophomoric admonishment of the colonizer *and* the native Arab bourgeoisie of whom Fanon spoke. With these proclamations, we are drawn into what David Lloyd and Patrick Wolfe call "the impeccable logic of the paranoid," where the colonizer operates on a "psychic 'state of siege': the representation of the world as a surround populated by uncivil peoples who pose what, in the language of the neoconservatism as of Zionism, is understood as an 'existential threat' to the civil subjects."[39]

Unpacking the civilizing discourse of Carleton should not be understood as an empty intellectual or academic exercise. We should instead understand this practice as a political necessity, a routine that helps us contour the psycho-politico-affective plane that is intended to be mobilized but remain undetected precisely because it is affixed to such hegemonically normative rhetoric. This practice antagonizes normative assumptions because, as Mohammed El-Kurd reminds us, "by spelling out the pernicious subtext of a particular argument or to simply reveal it through ridicule, dismissal, or repudiation, one disarms said argument, loosening the psychological grip it has on the listeners' minds."[40] That is, by externalizing the ideological trappings of the condition—especially when it is intentionally obscured through conscription into civilizational identifications—we are better able to remain aligned with our precondition and therefore in our psychic militancy.

Unlike the villainous caricature that Carleton attempts to project, Kanafani bursts through the screen, engaging Carleton with the psychic militancy of a revolutionary who cannot be wrenched from material reality or the goal of total liberation:

> Kanafani (K): I know, what I know really, is that the history of the world is always the history of weak people fighting strong people. Of weak people who has a correct case fighting strong people who used their strength to exploit the weak.

Completely ignoring the historical analysis of power in which Kanafani's argument is rooted, Carleton attempts to paternalistically "focus" Kanafani, turning his feigned concern to the "chaos" the PFLP has supposedly fomented in neighboring Jordan.

> Carleton (C): Turn to the fighting that's been going on in Jordan in the recent weeks. It's your organization that's been one side of the fight. What has it achieved?

We see Kanafani pause, and then without any hesitation, he pushes past Carleton's "gotcha" question, affirming the reality principle in which he and his comrades dwell.

> K: One thing, that we had a case to fight for. That's very much. This people, the Palestinian people, prefer to die standing than to lose its case. We achieved, we achieved proving that the king is wrong. We achieved proving that this nation is going to continue fighting till victory. We achieved that our people could never be defeated. We achieved teaching every single person in this world that we are a small brave nation who are going to fight to the last drop of blood to put justice for ourselves after the world failed in giving it to us. This is what we achieve.

The achievements Kanafani lists are those which are won when "no one sides with colonialism." When refusals are fueled by politicized resentment that registers how important it is to disrupt the seemingly impenetrable authority of the colonizer, whether that of Zionist forces or their traitorous collaborator proxy king. Psychically, he reaffirms his commitment to the

precondition: “teaching every single person in this world that we … are going to fight to the last drop of blood.” There will be no compromise, psychically or materially for Kanafani, no matter the attempts to derail him.

Prescient in his detection of the perniciousness of Rodríguez’s warnings on lexical warfare, Kanafani refuses to bend reality in lockstep with settler colonial logics:

> C: It does seem that the war, the civil war, has been quite fruitless.
>
> K: It’s not a civil war. It’s a people defending themselves against a fascist government which you are defending because just King Hussein has another passport. It’s not a civil war.
>
> C: Or a conflict.
>
> K: It’s not a conflict. It’s a liberation movement fighting for justice.
>
> C: Well, whatever it best be called.
>
> K: Not whatever. Because this is where the problem starts. Because this is what makes you answer all your questions, ask you all your questions. This is exactly where the problem starts. This is a people who is discriminated, is fighting for his rights. This is a story; if you will say it’s a civil war, then your questions will be as justified. If you say it’s a conflict, then of course it’s a surprise to know what’s happening.[41]

Like Malcom, Kanafani is concerned with precision, both semantically and psychically. This is not pedantry, but a practice of psychic militancy precisely because the revolutionaries from whom we learn were painstakingly attuned to the ways the struggle had to involve remaining antagonistic to any and all attempts to reconfigure material reality so that colonial violence could be transformed into an ever-expansive array of “facts on the ground.”[42] They were exceedingly weary of psychic inversions and actively practiced how one combats their pervasiveness. It did not matter that Kanafani would be viewed as oppositional, obstinate, or contrarian; he, like other revolutionaries, knew that they were always-already fixed in that position (as Carleton’s racist introductory monologue

proves). Refusing colonial legibility and refusing epistemological erasure emerged as the more vital and political task. Every disruption of the colonizing intent to diminish its violence and to deflect from responsibility is met with a rebuttal, as with my patient's disturbance at the use of the word "senseless." It is not a civil war, it is a people defending themselves; it is not a conflict, it is a liberation movement fighting for justice; it is not "whatever," it is an imperious intent to fix the frame of narrative discourse such that the questions and their answers are traps for the colonized. This is psychic militancy in motion. If we understand the nefarious intent of psychic intrusions, we can understand that the return to material reality is as much for Kanafani as for us, a model of how dogged we must be in our antagonism against psycho-politico-affective violence.

While Carleton's ideological misattunement continues unabated, we are invited into the most exquisite and meticulous exposé of the force of repetition that psychic militancy requires:

C: Why won't your organization engage in peace talks with Israelis?

K: You don't mean exactly peace talks, you mean capitulation, surrendering.

C: Why not just talk?

K: Talk to whom?

C: Talk to the Israeli leaders.

K: That's kind of conversation between the sword and the neck, you mean.

C: Well, if there are no swords and no guns in the room, you could still talk.

K: No. I haven't been, I had never seen any talk between a colonialist case and a national liberation movement.

C: But despite this, why not talk?

K: Talk about what?

C: Talk about the possibility of not fighting.

K: Not fighting for what?

C: Not fighting at all, no matter what.

K: ينعي (*ya'ani*, Arabic for *I mean*) people usually fight for something and they stop fighting for something. So, you can't tell me even why should we speak about what? Stop fighting or talk about stop fighting, why?

C: Talk to stop fighting. To stop the death and the misery, the destruction, the pain.

K: The misery and the destruction and the pain and the death of whom?

C: Of Palestinians, of Israelis, of Arabs.

K: Of the Palestinian people who are uprooted, thrown in the camps, living in starvation, killed for 20 years and forbidden to use even the name Palestinians?

C: Better that way than dead though.

K: Maybe to you. But to us it's not. To us, to liberate our country, to have dignity, to have respect, to have our mere human rights is something as essential as life itself. [43]

To watch Kanafani in action against Carleton's sanctimony is to be awe-inspired by the sheer clarity in his principles, the force of his intellect, and the determination of his will—not as an individual, but as someone militantly committed to the cause for total Palestinian liberation. On the surface, in the most cynical reading of his interventions, the questions Kanafani asks can be mistaken for merely rhetorical interventions. But in our study of psychic militancy, Kanafani reminds us that each opportunity to destabilize the grip of power is an opportunity in which we force that same power to expose itself, even as it recalibrates in front of our eyes. Kanafani does not allow Carleton (or his audience) to proceed with the innocence afforded most colonizers. In his militancy, he does not allow for a dismissive "whatever" or liberal platitudes about the civilizational importance of dialogue, as was repeated with the IARPP debacle. With every entreaty to "just talk," Kanafani lays bare the violence Carleton is

prescribing on him and all other Palestinians. “Talking” is a euphemism for surrender, for capitulation under violent conditions that are monopolized by the colonizer and those who share their power. Kanafani is unbending in returning himself, Carleton, and us to this point, astutely labeling it a “conversation between the sword and the neck”—a coercively pre-emptive death sentence in the guise of liberal humanist values, the very same concessions of which Fanon warned.

Kanafani’s practice of psychic militancy, his bold and continuous challenge of the terms through which Carleton is engaging with him, “rearranges the terms by which the relationship proceeds,” to return us to Saketopoulou’s insights. Carleton reveals his own colonial fantasy, a “civilized” world of reason, fairness, law and order, in which power and oppression does not circumscribe and dictate movement, opportunities, or access. A world where rooms without guns and swords magically exist under colonialism, cleaved from the larger condition in which checkpoints —or chokeholds as Jasbir Puar coins them—prisons, and borders create a technology of surveillance and control that does not need to rely on rooms with guns and swords to exact its asphyxiatory intent. In this racist fantasy, Carleton can articulate his most unabashedly colonial dictates: “no fighting at all, *no matter what*.” This capitulation is of course reserved only for the “gun-toting guerrillas,” not their colonial masters who have a monopoly on violence. Those who commit to “the business of revolution” are the ones who must stop fighting. Kanafani, listening with the acuity needed for sustained psychic militancy, does not let him off the hook. When Carleton articulates his vision of the unnamed people who would be saved by an end to the same “senseless” violence that my patient was bludgeoned by, Kanafani presses him, parroting back the vacuous words without so much as missing a beat: “the misery and the destruction and the pain and the death *of whom*?”

Kanafani pressurizes the words, forcing them to resist the searing process of settler colonial logics. Carleton in turn is forced to reveal his true concern, collapsing the so-called suffering of the colonizer with the colonized, another psychic inversion to which Kanafani responds to with

rapid-fire reiteration of a material reality to which Carleton is constitutively misattuned. Most powerfully, in the face of Carleton's attempts to psychically intrude and derail Kanafani's attentiveness, he forcefully articulates a recommitment to the precondition: "to liberate our country, to have dignity … is essential as life itself." As though he is speaking directly to Kanafani's psychic militancy, Fanon reminds us, "all this clarification, this subsequent raising of awareness and the advances along the road to understanding the history of societies can only be achieved if the people are organized and guided."[44] Kanafani and other revolutionaries before and after him—alongside my patients, our students, migrants, labor and political organizers, and political prisoners—have the potential to organize and guide us in their psychic militancy.

In learning from Kanafani's infamous interview, we must affirm that abandoning the precondition, even if only psychically "is where the problem starts," as he boldly asserts in response to Carleton's imperious linguistic gymnastics. To refuse the psychic framing on which settler colonial reality-bending relies is not a pedantic practice or a contrarian, idealist, utopian, or delusional response. Psychically, affectively, materially, and *politically*, the murderous repetition compulsion of state and settler state violence, of their PSYOPS arm, of their lexical warfare, compels us to repeatedly return to the position of militant refusal as militant affirmation, an affirmation to our own commitments to the precondition.

This practice should not be mistaken for mere rehearsal but rather a pointed psychic exercise that is intended to keep us aligned in our imperative to psychic militancy in service of our revolutionary futures. Said differently, the grinding, demoralizing, and horrifying daily realities of the Palestinian people, whether in Gaza, occupied Jerusalem, the West Bank or inside the 1948 borders of the Zionist entity, should not affectively and psychically coerce us to seek resolution through conspiring with those who seek to bend reality. Instead we should turn our attunement to their own militancy, to their commitment to life-making, as Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian reminds us, as well as their willful commitment to "the refusal to accept the impossible condition of banishment and disappearance from

one's homelands, and outright dispossession."[45] This repetition, as Kanafani's, returns us to the starting point, to the daily commitment to replenish the psychic, affective, and even social armor needed to thwart the disciplinary and enticing seductions that detract from Palestinian and all other liberation.

CONCLUSION

Invoking the united fight of political prisoners from Turtle Island to Palestine, revolutionary Black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal provides a characteristically militant message to the political organizers and audience at the 2025 People's Conference for Palestine in Detroit, Michigan. Like Daqqa, bin-Wahad, and other political prisoners who have studied the logics of power's attempt to sear consciousness, Mumia grounds us in the political necessity to refuse psychic inversions in service of our revolutionary futures:

> When we speak about Israeli Defense Force, I wonder who speaks about an Israeli Offense Force? That would be more honest. When we think about prisoners in Palestine, we have to think about all of Palestine. It is not just in the prisons of Israel where people are confined. All of Palestine is an open-air prison in Israel because of the ever-present occupation that has denied them life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. You know, those great things that Americans promise—and denied them everything, even life itself. The struggle must continue, and it will, as long as hearts beats around the world, as long as eyes see around the world, and as long as we love that which we call human. I thank you. With love, not fear. This is Mumia Abu-Jamal.[46]

With love, not fear, Mumia directs us to the urgency of psychic militancy, guiding us to remain rooted in our unbending analysis of material reality in the face of tenacious efforts to derail our political commitments. As we discussed in this chapter, the repetitious return to these seemingly self-

evident points is one way in which we commit to the precondition. Seizing the compulsion to repeat in this direction is a political strategy and practice that contains life-sustaining potentials. In this psychic routine of refusal, we track the violent work of the psycho-politico-affective and the grammar it mobilizes in our interiority with intent to settle. Here, in struggle, as with my patient, we affirm that militant refusals are necessary so that no one sides with colonialism, so that we are not seduced into the politics of recognition by murderous states, so that we are not conscripted into stabilizing colonial efforts at dialogue that work to ensure settler, settler colonial, and imperial futures at the expense of ours.

As with Mumia's unbending and crystalline analysis, psychic militancy is about willfully committing to a psychic clarity that insists on tracking, tracing, and naming the logic of violence, refusing to wrench it from its structural and material existence. Rather than being an empty or pedantic exercise, psychic militancy emerges as a counterforce to the civilizing mission of appeals to "reason" or Kleinian psychoanalysts' "depressive position" in the face of violence. We can apprehend where the impulse to reach to reason might come from, contouring the identifications that are implanted and animated within us to do the work of carceral discipline. It helps us remain vigilant to attempts to normalize and naturalize a reconfigured psychic terrain, distracting from the continual antagonism in which we must engage, if nothing else, to contest the foreclosed nature of power's victory.

Psychic militancy helps equip us to sustain our practice of noticing *and* disrupting these attempts, whether in their mundane or maximal instantiations, reminding us why the architects of PSYOPS moved from a focus on traditional warfare to that of cultural and psychological warfare. Psychic militancy is a psychic dwelling place that assures us that extremist positions, like those of Malcolm, Assata, Ghassan, and so many other revolutionaries, are psycho-affective guides for how to enact in the *now* what we are committed to building in the future. In the words of Ruth Wilson Gilmore, a reminder that "what the world will become already

exists in fragments and pieces, experiments and possibilities … [and we are] building the future from the present, in all the ways we can."[47]

If, through psychic militancy, we recognize that the purpose of psychic intrusions is to deflect, enforce disavowals, psychically invert, and disorient, then our *starting* point and not *response* must be to disrupt and recenter ourselves back to the precondition. It is through this persistence that we heed Fanon's call and willfully decide "in one and the same act, to break the vicious circle and inaugurate the reign of freedom."[48] Psychic militancy via refusals and affirmations—refusals that are affirmations—is the psychic and affective process that loyally reorients us to the certainty of liberation and our revolutionary futures.

5
Affirmations for Psychic Militancy

> Not a single position, not a single weapon, not a single secret should be given up to the class enemy. — *Che Guevara*[1]

Ron Gochez, a member of the revolutionary Unión del Barrio,[2] responds to an on-air question about "what is working" in the Unión's organizing against the vicious US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on migrant communities:

> What's working are the patrols. We're in every neighborhood of Los Angeles. This morning already we have combed through dozens of communities of Los Angeles looking for ICE activity. We do this at 5:30 in the morning because we know that's when ICE starts their operations. So, before they go and attack our community, we are looking for them and when we find them, we alert people with megaphones. That works. The megaphones wakes up the people. They let them know what's happening and *they also let ICE know that we're there and that we're not going to leave*. We're going to defend our community.[3]

Gochez, like Kanafani, Malcom, Assata, and Daqqa, is militantly clear about how power intends to intrude on our interiority, as much as on our material world. He commits himself to externalizing this psychic grammar to antagonize state violence (as mobilized through ICE) as it attempts to settle both inside *and* outside of us. It is a willful commitment that is practiced, in repetitive force, taking every opportunity in real time to disrupt the reach and imperiousness of the psycho-politico-affective realm that is

intent on dislodging him (and us) from our revolutionary commitments, past, present, and future. Here, megaphones transform into weapons of collective steadfastness, solidarity, and kinship, but also concrete tools to combatively alert power that its cruelty will not be allowed to unfold in secret. He, like others in this book, highlights for us that psychic militancy is a daily political commitment dedicated to sustaining the capacity to think and act in alignment with our revolutionary politics, despite the incessant seductions of psychic intrusions.

When asked if it is "sustainable" to keep up this struggle against ICE, Gochez, like Kanafani, does not miss a beat in refusing the enticements of reality-bending. Instead, with unflinching clarity, he returns us to the fundamental violent condition that birthed the struggle in which he and his comrades are engaged:

> We have been doing this for decades because our communities have been under attack by every administration since we can remember. *This is nothing new*. So, we are going to continue to organize in our communities and now we are training people not only in Los Angeles, we're training people in Chicago, Denver, Salt Lake City. These community patrols are growing.

Gochez's "this is nothing new," just like my patient's "I *know* I am not" in Chapter 4, brings us back into the realm of the repetitive force of violent systems and, more importantly, the unrelenting counterforce of repetition of material reality needed to defend against their seamless intrusion. We must name the repetition violence uses, expose its mechanics and intent, and forcefully disrupt it by reclaiming the disavowals that would have us affix a revisionist temporal plane to the violence. *This is nothing new* is a forceful affirmation for our struggle, not as a despairing refrain or a concession of the victory of power. Rather, the articulation expresses a perpetually renewed intention to sustain our fight with the patterned determination that violence requires. This is psychic militancy in kinetic motion.

If the psychic inversions we have discussed are a primary means through which psychic intrusions forcefully register themselves, acts of refusal and affirmation become vital in our attempts to sustain psychic militancy. Gochez, like Malcom, refuses to join the seductive invitation into lexical gymnastics. He realizes this does nothing but mire us in confusion and ultimately deflect from the material conditions that create suffering—the material conditions that are not up for debate because they are already known to us. Instead of engaging in the milquetoast civilizational politics of rationality and dialogue, Gochez beckons Fanon's precondition. He militantly responds to a question about detractors (the confusion-mongers) who insist that community patrols further endanger migrants:

> I would say those are the same types of people that would have criticized the Montogomery boycotts. I would say that those are the same types of people that would have, you know, argued that slavery shouldn't have ended: that was legal. So, *the legal question to us is irrelevant*. What is relevant to us is the wellbeing of our community, our families not being separated.

Gochez cuts through the pretense constructed by the confusion-mongers and their dissonant insistence on reason. As a reminder to us, every activated identification (here activated through civilizational codes such as "legality" and "danger") is paired with a coercive associative process of *dis*identification. In this example, even if we register ICE as a state-sponsored death squad, the line of questioning invites us into the "crazy-making" confusion that my patient described in Chapter 2; or into the concerns of being perceived as a "killjoy" if we disrupt the process in real time, like the organizers against ICE and police brutality in Chapter 3. More pointedly, the intent of this type of "innocent" questioning is to coerce us into doubting migrants and organizers through the mobilization of a civilizational discourse that activates the psycho-politico-affective realm. And, as in the case of Daqqa in prison, we are meant to prescribe their relational and behavioral requirements. This coercion functions under the

pretense that there could ever be an individual behavioral fix that would ensure safety during ICE raids or in detention centers. In our practice of psychic militancy, we must name this lie and work to expose the violent work it intends to do on our psyche and against our political movements.

In his practice of psychic militancy, Gochez does not allow us to dwell in this bad faith argument. Nor will he let liberalism and its selective investments in law and order off the hook. Modeling the unbending force that psychic militancy demands, he refuses to bend away from what may be seen as "extremism," just as Malcolm did in Paris. In committing to the knowledge that emerges from the materiality of the moment, he reconfigures the starting point of subsequent conversations having to do with migrants, and the violence ICE enacts on them, to a precondition of liberation. Full liberation is the precondition—a world where the structures that create the possibility for migrant communities to be targeted and their families dismembered no longer exist.

The force and value of Ron Gochez's psychic militancy could be overlooked if we do not reskill ourselves to attune to the mundane, just as readily as we are attuned to the absurdity of current outlandish spectacles. These examples saturate our everyday lives but can often be downplayed or ignored. My hope is that, as with other examples I have used throughout the book, we can not only attune to the logic of violence—from the genocide in Gaza to the ICE raids in the US settler colony—but, more importantly, to the urgency of our own patterned daily regimen of psychic affirmation and refusal.

We need continued collective organizing and direct action. What this book has also tried to communicate is the centrality of our psychic province both to power's attempt to derail the certainty of our revolutionary futures *and* the contested space we must seize to ensure violence does not settle within us without antagonism. Reskilling ourselves to attune to attempts at psychic intrusions *and* the necessary counterforce of psychic militancy is the daily political project I want to impress on us. Becoming attuned to conscious (and unconscious) processes ourselves makes it more possible that we cede no psychic space; more possible that we can be "extremists"

and not be ashamed of it; more possible that we are able to resist the seductions and coercive entreaties of violent systems that rely on our identifications and internalizations of power to exact carceral discipline on us.

PSYCHOANALYSIS FOR REVOLUTIONARY FUTURES

I do not intend to launder the sordid history of psychoanalysis, nor run cover for its current violence—whether that is through giving cover for genocidaires in the field or those intent on the snuffing out of trans life. As we have explored in this book, psychoanalysis as a set of theories and methods has aided in the expansionist project of violence, lending legitimacy to PSYOPS and their architects. Psychoanalysis is also uniquely positioned to pathologize forms of being and sociality that disrupt a colonial, racial capitalist, and/ or cis-heteronormative order, thereby capitalizing on the civilizing mission of creating atomized subjects who reproduce normativity as the exclusive goal of good mental health. These subjects (especially those of us engaged in liberatory work) are meant to be "successfully" domesticated, derailed from their revolutionary commitments and the fire that commits them to struggle—all under the guise of innocent saviorism. Aimé Césaire punctuated this *mission civilisatrice* as a constitutive feature of psychoanalysis:

> Away with racism! Away with colonialism! They smack too much of barbarism. M. Mannoni has something better: psychoanalysis. Embellished with existentialism, it gives astonishing results: the most down-at-the-heel clichés are re-soled for you and made good as new; the most absurd prejudices are explained and justified; and, as if by magic, the moon is turned into green cheese.[4]

Césaire reminds us that an unseized psychoanalysis will always remain, at best, the psychoanalysis of Mannoni; a violently innocent, colonizing psychoanalysis that is intent on proving "that there are in this world groups

of men who, *for unknown reasons*, suffer from what must be called a dependency complex, that these groups are psychologically made for dependence; that they need dependence, that they crave it, ask for it, demand it."[5] Seizing psychoanalysis for revolutionary futures means the reasons for why people suffer do not remain unknown, unnamed, or unmarked. It means we reclaim the professional, technical, and theoretical know-how that is central to the violent work of PSYOPS, for example, and despecialize it for our collective use—to constitute one weapon among many in our revolutionary struggles for total liberation. More simply, seizing psychoanalysis is more about realizing that our psyches are always being worked on and learning the mechanics of the psycho-politico-affective, than about stabilizing the field or clinical practice.

We have examples of how this is already being done. Gail Lewis, for example, works and lives through the prism of Black feminisms and psychoanalysis to imagine possibilities of political coalition building that are not hamstrung by neoliberal articulations of identity, space, and place. Lewis reminds us that our political project ideally "articulates a need to evaluate shifts in visions and priorities in the light of complex intertwining of ideological, material, psychic, local, national and global conditions." She calls this *space-making/ placeholding*. Space-making/placeholding nurtures "disruptions to the orthodoxies through which racialised people have been named and made intelligible in the logics of governance and regulation by state institutions and media alike."[6]

We can think of psychic militancy as needing to be involved in the practice of space-making/placeholding—a psychic counterforce to a teleological framing. With psychic militancy we can insist on a Fanonian truth-telling about the very processes that brought about the violent condition. In animating the psychic import of emergent possibilities that we must create together rather than in isolation, or in Fanon's alienation, we can psychically resist falling in line with counterinsurgent foreclosures of the pragmatic brand. Refusing these seductions acts as an affirmative practice to nourish an anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and anti-capitalist external material reality, as well as *internal* psychic and affective reality. As

we have discussed, this is a practice, a daily psychic and political commitment. And it cannot happen alone. Every example in this book describes meaning-making that comrades are enacting together, through struggle, in relationality, even if they are not in the same shared physical space. My hope is that this book has also offered such a space, no matter how small.

Psychic militancy is not a fantastical displacement of material reality. It is not a neoliberal manifestation that runs on good vibes or empty wishes. It is not easy, nor is it painless, nor magical (although it might hold potentiality for enchantment in the way Bassel Al-Araj invites us into it).[7] Rather, psychic militancy is an affective, relational, and political practice of modes of consciousness, being, and doing in the world—just like the best types of psychoanalytic engagement and even clinical work. In this practice, possibilities are worked out, reworked, done and redone, precisely to insist on our revolutionary futures in defiance of the counterinsurgent work of the psycho-politico-affective and the systems of oppression that mobilize its force. Because the process of becoming aware of and refusing psychic intrusions in service of our revolutionary futures is itself dynamic, it necessarily includes possibilities we cannot bring into consciousness in this moment—possibilities that themselves emerge through our political engagement with each other in the struggle against fascism. We have witnessed these types of possibilities come into being with acuity in the past two years, especially: a global intifada for Palestine; indigenous militant uprisings across the globe; widespread community patrols that protect communities from ICE. The possibilities are also heard in the histories from which we constantly draw—in the fights fought by our revolutionary elders and ancestors.

An acknowledgment that the full possibilities of our struggles are yet to be known is as important as anything, so that we are able to divest from all modes of functioning that fix us into a history that not only has not yet happened via a commodified despair (as in the wholesale writing off of Gaza, Palestine, and Palestinians into a bygone), but that can and must be willfully undone in the present. Psychic militancy is one political practice

that makes it such that all possibilities remain viable and dynamic. This is precisely because psychic militancy roots us in the reality principle, in the attunement to and tracing of the logic of violence and our knowledge that expansionist projects of imperialism and settler colonialism (whether the Zionist version or what we find in the settler colony of the USA), for example, seek to invade the psychic as readily as our geographical territories.

THE FUTURE CONDITIONAL

Foluke Taylor asks us, "what would have had to happen for us to have been able to breathe and live [in revolutionary futures] now?"[8] I am making the case that a key factor in ensuring the futures we intend—for our revolutionary struggles and the world we struggle for—is to make certain we do not overlook the centrality of the psychic province in the *now*. With this aim in mind, it has been important for me to appropriate and despecialize the professional, clinical, and specifically psychoanalytic, knowledge I have accrued over the past fifteen years, especially for comrades engaged in revolutionary struggles. Now more than ever, the crush of global fascism in its imperial, settler colonial, and colonial instantiations is poised to deploy every crushing force against us in a bid to deflect from what must be the certainty that we can "breathe and live" in the revolutionary world we are fighting for. Learning to read the ways the psycho-politico-affective plane is activated and mobilized by PSYOPS, how psychic inversions are intended to do this work seamlessly, and most importantly, commit to a daily practice of defying their settlement in our interiority is how we build up and sustain psychic militancy.

To remain rooted in this practice is to transform our worlds into contested lived space where we recognize that, while our psychic terrain is a place primed for intrusion, we are also able to use psychic militancy as a weapon against that intrusion. The most moving part of this for me, and what I have tried to convey in the examples I have used, is that we have very compelling illustrations of psychic militancy gifted to us by our

revolutionary heroes and ancestors *and* by contemporary folks who are a part of the vibrant struggles that are taking place in real time.

The movement for Palestinian liberation has taken a central role in this book. At the same time, I hope we will remain committed to reading this as a portable logic for other struggles, interlinked, "multidimensional and intersecting" struggles, as Françoise Vergès would say, rather than as an exclusivizing intervention.[9] The interconnectedness of struggles is one such way for us to imagine this, whether that is the shared surveillance technology used in the settler colony of the USA against activists and migrants as it is used against Palestinians in the Zionist state; or how trans lives are being systematically degraded and attempts made to disappear them, trying to make it such that trans kids cannot move with us into the future; or the degradation of the environment such that life becomes impossible to sustain. Attuning to the interconnectedness of struggles is not meant to be a "market exchange" as Robin D.G. Kelley warns us,[10] but rather, in the nomenclature of this book, is the way in which we can attune to the intrusive appearances and force of oppressive systems and their intention to mobilize our psyche and our affect to exact their violent political aims.

We must be prepared to engage in our own repetition—seizing psychoanalysis' purview of the compulsion to repeat—and be assured that this repetition is not pathological. We repeat to make certain that we remain tethered to material reality. We repeat so that we remain engaged and antagonistic to the seamlessness of psychic intrusion. We repeat to make certain that every attempt to reconfigure our interiority is contested. We repeat so that we can remain certain of our revolutionary futures and total liberation, to remain rooted in the precondition: full and complete liberation for us all.

Notes

INTRODUCTION: FROM THE CLINIC TO THE STREETS

1. See, for example: Israel Education Center, *The Playbook: Tackling the Delegitimization of Israel on Campus*, https://www.juf.org/pdf/iec/IEC-playbook.pdf and World Union of Jewish Students, *Hasbara Handbook: Promoting Israel on Campus*, http://www.middle-east-info.org/take/wujshasbara.pdf.
2. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 103.
3. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, "Speaking Life, Speaking Death: Jerusalemite Children Confronting Israel's Technologies of Violence, " in *The Emerald Handbook of Feminism, Criminology and Social Change*, ed. Sandra Walklate, Kate Fitz-Gibbon, Jane Maree Maher, and Jude McCulloch (London: Emerald Publishing, 2020), 253–70.
4. See, Lara Sheehi, "Palestine Is a Four-Letter Word: Psychoanalytic Innocence and Its Malcontents," in *For Palestine: Essays from the Tom Hurndall Memorial Lecture Group*, ed. Ian Parker (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2023).
5. Throughout this book, I do not name the settler colony that now occupies all of Palestine, but rather use different labels to connote the genocidal entity. This is not a pedantic position, even if it may land as tedious to readers. Rather, it is an active political practice of refusal as someone from the region who contests both the borders imposed on us and their projected permanence, both of which rely on our psychic and material surrender. It is also an in-vivo exercise, central to this book, of refusing psychic intrusions that rely on the normalization of settler colonial reality bending. For a thoughtful articulation of why this in necessary, see Steven Salaita, "Down with the Zionist Entity; Long Live 'the Zionist Entity, '" May 23, 2024, https://stevesalaita.com/down-with-the-zionist-entity-long-live-the-zionist-entity/
6. Avgi Saketopoulou, *Sexuality beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* (New York: NYU Press, 2023), 50.
7. Ibid., p. 67
8. Lara Sheehi and Stephen Sheehi, *Psychoanalysis under Occupation: Practicing Resistance in Palestine* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 114–59. Drawing from Gloria Wekker's "white innocence," the concept of psychoanalytic innocence takes up how psychoanalytic theory and practice can work in service of violence in the context of the settler colonial condition in Palestine. For example, we attend to how, ideologically, psychoanalysis' insistence on dialogue, reason, and working through, without a sustained analysis of the material conditions of dispossession in Palestine, acts under the pretense not only of neutrality and objectivity but also universalism, empathy as an endpoint of process, and the myth of safety. We name how, in this context, psychoanalytic innocence works in concert with the logic of settler colonialism and occupation, denying the everyday violence enacted on Palestinians and conveniently

forgetting how this is also structured by the unconscious. Psychoanalytic innocence is particularly insidious because it simultaneously forfeits psychoanalysis' supposition of unconscious process and structure, while also ignoring material reality. Importantly, it is not understood as an intrapsychic process that disrupts the psychoanalyst's thinking, but rather as an innocence that pervades the ideological position of the practice, the theory, and therefore the relational space of psychoanalysis. We are particularly interested in the way psychoanalytic innocence functions in "dialogue initiatives," which we understand as part of a normalization effort.

9. Ibid., 115–59.
10. Sara Ahmed, *Wilful Subjects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
11. Noura Erakat, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019).
12. Sheehi and Sheehi, *Psychoanalysis under Occupation*, 14.
13. Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 47–51.
14. For example, as early as 1911, Eugen Bleuler, a close and early collaborator with Freud, advocated for forced sterilization and castration of people diagnosed with schizophrenia. See, for example, his *Dementia Praecox*.
15. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 35.
16. Ibid., 90.
17. Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psychoanalysis)," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 12, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1958), 145–56.
18. See for example, Adam Shatz, "Where Life Is Seized," *London Review of Books*, February 1, 2017, https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v39/n02/adam-shatz/where-life-is-seized
19. Stephen Sheehi and Lara Sheehi, "The Colonial Republic of Psychoanalysis: How Psychoanalysis Polices the Psychic Sovereignty of 'Others'," *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 30 (2025): 563–82 https://doi.org/10.1057/s41282-024-00490-0
20. Ian Parker and Damián Pavón-Cuéllar, *Psychoanalysis and Revolution: Critical Psychology for Liberation Movements* (London: 1968 Press, 2021), 4.
21. Paul B. Preciado, *Can the Monster Speak? Report to an Academy of Psychoanalysts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 31.
22. See for example, Jewish Voice for Labour, "Homes Raided, Joy Outlawed as Palestinians Are Released from Prison," January 20, 2025, https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/homes-raided-joy-outlawed-as-palestinians-are-released-from-prison/
23. Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 3.
24. Erik H. Erikson and Huey P. Newton, *In Search of Common Ground: Conversations with Erik H. Erikson and Huey P. Newton* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973).
25. See for example, George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye* (New York: Random House, 1972); Walid Daqaa, "Searing Consciousness"; Kapano Ratele, "Title of Article on Steve Biko," *Studies in*

Gender and Sexuality 22, no. 4 (2021): 311–21.

26. See for example, Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).
27. See Avgi Saketopoulou's searing account of being disinvited to speak at the Freud Museum in Vienna because of her support for Palestine: Avgi Saketopoulou, "Just Say Genocide: The Problem of Truth Sadism," *The Battleground*, November 28, 2024, https://thebattleground.eu/2024/11/28/just-say-genocide/
28. See "Group Dynamics and Division of Labor within the AntiLGBTQ+ Pseudoscience Network," Southern Poverty Law Center, December 12, 2023, https://www.splcenter.org/resources/reports/defining-pseudoscience-network/
29. Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar, *Psychoanalysis and Revolution*, 7–8.
30. I have used the concept of pressurizing words in a piece published in *Worms Magazine* found here: Lara Sheehi, "On Pressurising Words," *Worms Magazine*, November 14, 2023, https://www.wormsmagazine.com/psychoanalysis/on-pressurising-words-lara-sheehi
31. See her article: Ghina Abi-Ghannam, "Naming Israel's Psychological War on the Palestinians: Walid Daqqa's *Searing Consciousness* (Or on Redefining Torture)," *Liberated Texts*, accessed November 1, 2025, https://liberatedtexts.com/reviews/naming-israels-psychological-war-on-the-palestinians-walid-daqqas-searing-consciousness-or-on-redefining-torture/
32. Avgi Saketopoulou, "Exigent Sadism: Austerity Logics and the AntiReparative Turn," *Social Text*, Volume 166, p. 25–51; Amílcar Cabral, "The Weapon of Theory," address delivered at the First Tricontinental Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, Havana, January 1966, https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/cabral/1966/weapon-theory.htm; Stephen Sheehi, "Theory as Stone," *Social Text*, January 25, 2024, https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/theory-as-stone/
33. See for example, Celia Brickman, *Race in Psychoanalysis: Aboriginal Populations in the Mind* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).
34. For a rousing call in response to this, see Carter J. Carter, "RU 347: CARTER CARTER on Abolishing the Psychoanalytic Institute," Rendering Unconscious Podcast episode 347, May 16, 2025, Psychoanalysis and Social Justice, https://www.psychoanalysisandsocialjustice.com/2025/05/16/carter-carter-on-abolishing-the-psychoanalytic-institute-rendering-unconscious-episode-347/
35. Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2022).
36. See for example Lara Sheehi, "On Targeting an Arab Woman," *Counter-Punch*, February 3, 2023, https://www.counterpunch.org/2023/02/03/on-targeting-an-arab-woman/ and Lara Sheehi, "Intent to Harm: Settler Colonial Outposts in Psychoanalysis," *Middle East Critique* 33, no. 3 (2024): 419–34.
37. See for example, Steven Salaita, "Some Lessons about Zionism and AntiZionism from an Ongoing Genocide," Steve Salaita—Blog, accessed November 1, 2025, https://stevesalaita.com/some-lessons-about-zionism-and-anti-zionism-from-an-ongoing-genocide/
38. See for example the Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism's project, "Zionist Smear as Weapon & Ideology: Documenting, Theorizing, Resisting," Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism, accessed November 1, 2025, https://criticalzionismstudies.org/smear/

39. See for example, Louis Allday, “Zionism: Inherently Racist, Violent, and Expansionist,” *Orinoco Tribune*, June 17, 2025, https://www.orinocotribune.com/zionism-inherently-racist-violent-and-expansionist/
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41. See Carter J. Carter, *Bound to Lose: How Fascism Came for Psychoanalysis* (forthcoming: Temple University Press).
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1 WARFARE PSYCHOLOGICALLY WAGED

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33. See Major Ed Rouse (Ret.), “History of Psychological Operations/Warfare,” Psywarrior.com, accessed November 1, 2025, https://www.psywarrior.com/psyhist.html
34. Brian Nichipauk, *US Military Opportunities: Information-Warfare Concepts of Operation*, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/reports (italics added).
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37. Ibid., 21.
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42. Ibid., 208–9.
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44. Ibid., 184.
45. Ibid., 208.

46. Sonic deception is a military offensive operation that “can take the form of an interpreter or other trusted native speaker calling out false orders, cries for help, and even the names of enemy soldiers (if known) to create confusion among enemy forces. If successful, false orders and callouts can disrupt enemy defenses by creating dissension and distrust among organization members.” Found at: Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Training Circular 5303.1: Tactical Psychological Operations Detachments and Teams Guide* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army, February 16, 2024), https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/tc53-03-1.pdf, 12.
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48. Ibid., 2-27.
49. Burton, *Tip of the Spear*, 209.
50. Found at: Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-05.301 Psychological Operations Process: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, 2-21 (italics added).
51. Ibid., 2-28.
52. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 91.
53. Rodríguez, *Counterinsurgency Machine*.

2 PSYCHIC INTRUSIONS

1. I do not use the term “patient” flippantly, or without considerable attention to the comprehensive critiques of abuse of power related to these labels (see, for example, a very early critique of psychiatry and psychiatric labels, *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct* [1960] by Thomas Szasz, or more contemporarily in critical disability studies by Katie Aubrecht [2014] in the article, “Disability Studies and the Language of Mental Illness,” *Review of Disability Studies* 8); rather, I use the word as a position against the seduction that pacificatory lexical change sometimes creates without doing anything to dismantle the structure through which the label exacts it power (for example, Rogerian therapy’s swapping out of “patient” with “client” continues to work within a system of disciplinary control under the guise of help). I ground myself in the sordid history of the field and, more importantly, in my own responsibility not to disavow the harms *it continues to exact*. In not accepting the simplicity of swapped terms within a persistently violent system, then, the use of “patient” is a reality-testing practice to remain militantly attuned to *my* responsibility to upend the violence of the field to which I am professionally tethered.
2. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 148.
3. George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1972), 182.
4. Ibid., 181.
5. Ibid., 181.
6. Ibid., 185, italics added.
7. Orisanmi Burton, *Tip of the Spear* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023), 41.
8. American Correctional Association (ACA), *Causes, Preventive Measures, and Methods of Controlling Riots and Disturbances in Correctional Institutions*, as cited in Burton, *Tip of the*

Spear, 14.

9. Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar, *Psychoanalysis and Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2021), 32.
10. Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 18.
11. The concept of gaslighting was first popularized in Patrick Hamilton's 1938 play *Gas Light*, most famously remade into the movie *Gaslight* in 1944, starring Ingrid Bergman. In the film, Bergman's husband makes her feel insane by dimming the gaslights and denying that there has been any change to their brightness when she notices them waning. In the play and later in the film, the character begins to doubt herself leading her to feel insane. The term has now been incorporated into the psychological literature and is frequently used in pop-psychology to refer to the psychological and manipulative abuse present in "toxic relationships"—especially related to narcissism.
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13. Sara Ahmed, *Willful Subjects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 139.
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16. For contemporary and searing examples see, Avgi Saketopoulou and Ann Pellegrini, *Gender without Identity* (London: Unconscious in Translation Press, 2023); Foluke Taylor, *Unruly Therapeutic: Black Feminist Writings and Practices in the Living Room* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2023); Paul B. Preciado, *Can the Monster Speak? Report to an Academy of Psychoanalysts* (London: MIT Press, 2020); and edited books like Nancy Caro Hollander, Lynne Layton, and Susan Gutwill, eds., *Psychoanalysis, Class and Politics: Encounters in the Clinical Setting* (New York: Routledge, 2006) and Lynne Layton and Marianna Leavy-Sperounis, eds., *Toward a Social Psychoanalysis: Culture, Character, and Normative Unconscious Processes* (London: Routledge, 2020).
17. Eli Zaretsky, *Political Freud* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 21.
18. Celia Brickman, *Race in Psychoanalysis: Aboriginal Populations in the Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
19. Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Standard Edition, vol. 18 (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 69.
20. R.D. Laing, *Self and Others* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 82. Italics in original.
21. See Layton and Leavy-Sperounis, *Social Psychoanalysis*.
22. Zaretsky, *Political Freud*, 149.
23. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).
24. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 203.
25. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 25.
26. Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar, *Psychoanalysis and Revolution*, 67.
27. Saketopolou and Pellegrini, *Gender without Identity*, xxii

28. Avgi Saketopoulou, *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* (London: Unconscious in Translation Press, 2023), 4.
29. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010).
30. Ibid., 14.
31. Amnéris Maroni, interview with Christopher Bollas, *Percurso*, August 7, 2016, https://porquebollasblog.wordpress.com/2016/08/07/entrevista-de-c-bollas-na-revista-percurso
32. Saketopoulou, *Sexuality Beyond Consent*, 126.
33. Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 60.
34. Laing, *Self and Others*, 134. Italics in original.
35. Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 25. Italics in original.
36. Freud, *Group Psychology*, 107.
37. Ibid., p. 110, fn. 2.
38. Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar, *Psychoanalysis and Revolution*, 57.
39. Mohammed El-Kurd, *Perfect Victims* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2025), 39.
40. Ibid., 91.
41. Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar, *Psychoanalysis and Revolution*, 55.
42. Nick Heather, *Radical Perspectives in Psychology* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1976), 39.
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44. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 94.
45. I would like to extend a special shout out to the comrades who set up proto encampments before the official global Student Intifada kicked off. A special shout out to the comrades at the University of Pennsylvania who occupied their student center and who Stephen Sheehi and I had the honor of visiting and speaking with in December 2023. Another special shout out goes out to the comrades at Goldsmiths, University of London, who staged a militant and politically comprehensive occupation of the Stuart Hall building in February 2024 in response to their administration's lack of response to the Zionist entity's genocide in Gaza. Stephen Sheehi, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian and I had the honor of visiting their occupation and speaking with students in March 2024.
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Felony Assault," *CNN*, May 24, 2024, https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/24/us/pro-palestine-encampment-attack-ucla-arrest

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3 RESKILLING OURSELVES

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4. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 149.
5. Ibid., 3.
6. Ibid., 2. Italics in original.
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8. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 182.
9. Ghina Abi-Ghannam, "Naming Israel's Psychological War on the Palestinians: Walid Daqqa's Searing Consciousness (Or on Redefining Torture)," Abolition Media, https://abolitionmedia.noblogs.org/7336/
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13. Nick Estes, *Our History Is the Future* (London: Verso, 2019), 248.
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18. Françoise Vergès, *A Decolonial Feminism* (London: Pluto Press, 2019), 62.
19. Peter Watson, *War on the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 37.
20. Amos N. Wilson, *The Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness: Eurocentric History, Psychiatry, and the Politics of White Supremacy* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001), 35.
21. Watson, *War on the Mind*, 38.
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24. Ibid., 3.
25. This was perhaps best epitomized by a leaked email sent by K. Wayne Yang (co-author of famed "anti-colonial" article with Eve Tuck "Decolonization is not a Metaphor") to University of California San Diego faculty where he urges students to compromise and meet with faculty and administrators as "the more students can understand that UCPD [University of California Police Department] can serve their safety interests, the better"; he also provides strategies on how to coax students to "compromise." My gratitude to Sina Rahmani who located for me the post in which this email was disclosed, found here: https://x.com/theiachatelle/status/1917643715356615052.
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30. See a powerful psychoanalytic exposé of the state of dysregulation she calls "overwhelm" across a variety of experiences in Avgi Saketopoulou, *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* (New York: NYU Press, 2023).

4 PSYCHIC MILITANCY

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2. Ibid., 579. The groundwork for theorizing around psychic militancy was done primarily in conversations with Jared Ware on "Millennials Are Killing Capitalism Live!" I owe so much of my thinking to the evocative, generative, and generous conversations Jared has invited me into. The first time this theorizing showed up in print was in a co-written piece with Stephen Sheehi, "No Dreams Beyond Reality: Liberation Is the Precondition of Our Struggle," in *The New York War Crimes: One Year Edition*, 7 October 2024. A lengthier discussion of psychic militancy, reproduced in part in this chapter, can be found in Lara Sheehi, "Psychic Militancy Against (Psychic) Imperialism," *Discontent Magazine*, no. 5 (2025).
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4. Nick Estes, *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (London: Verso, 2019), 248.
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9. Diana Fuss, "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification," *differences* 24, no. 2 (1994): 24.
10. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955).
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13. Orisanmi Burton, *Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism, Prison Repression, and the Long Attica Revolt* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2023), 208.
14. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; original italics.
15. Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*, 169.
16. Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, 78. Italics added.
17. *For Health Autonomy: Horizons of Care Beyond Austerity—Reflections from Greece* (Athens: Common Notions Press, 2020), 46.
18. For an exceptionally incisive reading of Melanie Klein's theoretical presuppositions as themselves colonial, and the ways in which they contributed to the psychic possibility of a liberal subject with no claim to material repair, see David L. Eng, "Colonial Object Relations," *Social Text* 34, no. 1 (2016): 1–19.
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21. Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 61.

22. Malcolm X, *By Any Means Necessary* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1989; originally published 1970), 122. Italics added.
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27. Rodríguez, *Counterinsurgency Machine*. Italics in original.
28. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 4.
29. Avgi Saketopoulou, "Exigent Sadism: Austerity Logics and the AntiReparative Turn," *Social Text* (forthcoming).
30. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 177.
31. Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, 577.
32. For a more comprehensive discussion of how the IARPP's decision enacted what Stephen Sheehi and myself have called "psychoanalytic innocence," see our discussion in "Psychoanalytic Innocence: The Ideological Misattunement of Dialogue," in Lara Sheehi and Stephen Sheehi, *Psychoanalysis under Occupation: Practicing Resistance in Palestine* (New York: Routledge, 2022), Chapter 3. An abridged version of this section is found in Lara Sheehi, "Palestine Is a FourLetter Word: Psychoanalytic Innocence and Its Malcontents," in *For Palestine: Essays from the Tom Hurndall Memorial Lecture Group*, ed. Ian Parker (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023), 245–62.
33. Found here: PUSWP Palestine (Facebook page), "Post regarding …," Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/PUSWP.Palestine/posts/902274599967730
34. See an abridged version of this critique in Lara Sheehi, "Disavowing Israeli Apartheid," *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, June 22, 2019, https://merip.org/2019/06/disavowing-israeli-apartheid/
35. Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 55–6.
36. M. Palacios and S. Sheehi, "Vaporizing White Innocence: Confronting the Affective-Aesthetic Matrix of Desiring Witnessing," *Subjectivity* 13 (2020): 296.
37. Reproduced from Lara Sheehi, "Disavowing Israeli Apartheid."
38. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 90.
39. Patrick Wolfe and David Lloyd, "Settler Colonial Logics and the Neoliberal Regime," *Settler Colonial Studies* 6, no. 2 (2014): 114.
40. Mohammed El-Kurd, *Perfect Victims* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2025), 122.
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42. See, for example, Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
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48. Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, 577.

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